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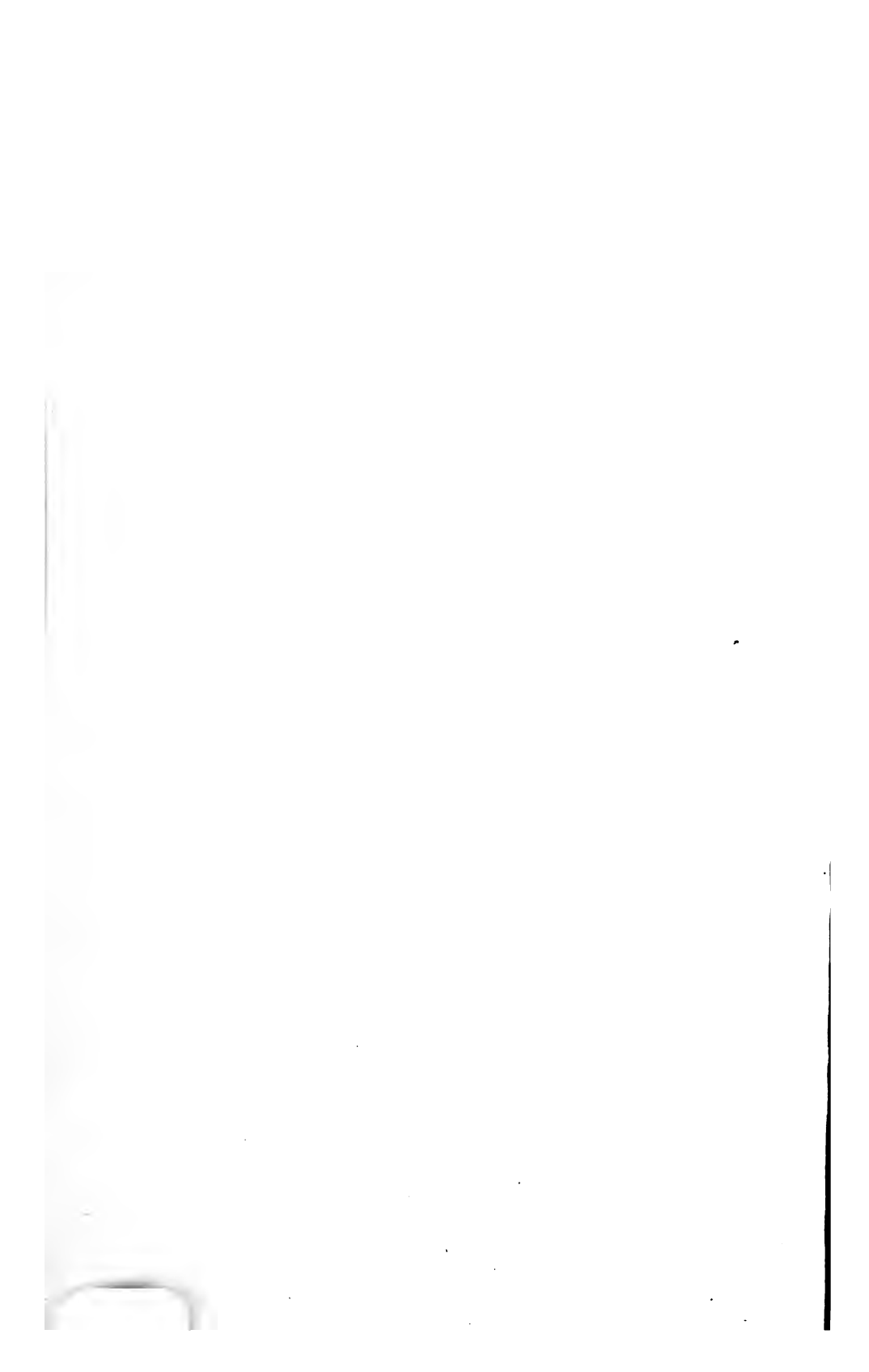
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A
CATALOGUE OF PICTURES
IN THE
NATIONAL GALLERY.



A
 DESCRIPTIVE, EXPLANATORY, AND CRITICAL,
 CATALOGUE

OF
 FIFTY OF THE EARLIEST PICTURES

CONTAINED IN THE

London
 NATIONAL GALLERY

OF
 Great Britain.

BY JOHN LANDSEER,

FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES, MEMBER OF THE LONDON ROYAL ACADEMY OF
 ARTS, ENGRAVER TO THE KING; AND AUTHOR OF SABEAN RESEARCHES,
 AND A VOLUME OF LECTURES ON THE ART OF ENGRAVING DELIVERED AT THE
 ROYAL INSTITUTION.

A thing of Beauty, is a joy for ever :
 Its loveliness increases: it will never
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
 A bower quiet for us" — KEATS.

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1834.

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*For the
of the
(16) 100 pages.*



TO
THE HONOURABLE THE TRUSTEES
OF THE
NATIONAL GALLERY
OF
GREAT BRITAIN,
THIS CATALOGUE
IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY
THE AUTHOR.



CONTENTS.

SUBJECTS OF PICTURES.	PAINTERS.	PAGE
PREFACE		v
Profile of an Old Man	SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS	xv
The Banished Lord	Do.	xix
Jesus Christ arguing in the Synagogue	LIONARDO DA VINCI	1
The Conversion of St. Paul	ERCOLE OF FERRARA	8
HOLY FAMILIES		15
The Visitation of St. Elizabeth	ANDREA DEL SARTO	17
The Holy Family visited by St. Elizabeth, &c.	LODOVICO MAZZOLINI	23
The Vision of Saint Augustine	BENVENUTO TISIO	31
Portrait of a (Florentine) Lady	ANGIOLO BRONZINO	38
The Dream of Human Life (<i>after</i>)	M. ANGELO BUONAROTI	41
Portrait of Pope Julius II.	RAPHAEL SANZIO	52
Charity; or, the Madonna and Holy Infants	JULIO ROMANO	57
The Holy Family	ANTONIO DA COREGGIO	66
The Vision of St. Jerome	PARMEGIANO	74
Portraits of the Painter, and of Cardinal Hippolito de Medicis	SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO	85
Do. of Julia Gonzaga, as a sainted Martyr	Do.	89
The Resurrection of Lazarus— <i>from the design of</i> MICHAEL ANGELO	Do.	92
The Martyrdom of Peter the Dominican	GIORGIONE	119
A Music Party	TITIANO VECELLIO	127
Bacchus and Ariadne	Do.	131
INCIPIENCY OF LANDSCAPE-PAINTING		143
Landscape, with Saint George and the Dragon	DOMINICHINO	148
St. George combating the Dragon	TINTORETTO	155
The Initiation, or Consecration, of Saint Nicholas	PAUL VERONESE	160
The Rape of Europa	Do.	167
The Holy Family	FEDERIGO BAROCCIO	175
Susanna and the Elders	LODOWICO CARACCI	182

SUBJECTS OF PICTURES.	PAINTERS.	PAGE
St. Peter and the Apparition of Christ .	ANNIBAL CARACCI . .	192
Pan instructing Apollo	Do.	198
Silenus gathering Grapes	Do.	203
St. Jerome instructed by an Angel . .	DOMINICHINO	207
Erminia's Interview with the Shepherd	Do.	213
An Allegory (presented to K. Charles I.)	SIR P. P. RUBENS . .	217
A Flemish Landscape and Figures . .	Do.	237
ALLEGORIC PAINTING	245
The Holy Family; or, Triumph of Saint George	RUBENS	251
An Italian Summer's Morning	JAN BOTH	267
Group of three Portraits	SIR ANTHONY VANDYCK	272
Portrait of Gevartius	Do.	277
Cephalus and Aurora	NICCOLO POUSSIN . .	281
A Classical Landscape	Do.	299
A Bacchanalian Dance, or Rural Re- joicing of the Golden Age	Do.	309
A Land Storm	GASPAR POUSSIN . .	319
View of La Riccia	Do.	323
A Woman bathing, or Peasant Laundress	REMBRANDT VAN RHYN	326
Jesus Christ pardoning the Adulteress .	Do.	329
St. John the Baptist preaching	FRANCISCO MOLA . .	339
Study of Trees from Nature	CLAUDE OF LORRAINE .	344
Landscape, with Narcissus and Echo .	Do.	359
Do. with the Death of Procris	Do.	368
Mercury instructing Cupid	ANTONIO DA COREGGIO	373
The Ecce Homo!	Do.	386
The Restoration of the Ark of the Cove- nant	SEBASTIAN BOURDON .	393
The Embarkation of the Eleven Thou- sand Virgins with St. Ursula	CLAUDE OF LORRAINE .	407

PREFACE.

It will probably be allowed to be of some national importance, that the British National Picture-gallery should be well understood, and its beauties and merits be thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed, by the British public; since whatever may be the stock, or quantum, and kind, of taste and information derived, or derivable, from it, that stock is expected, by those who have projected and provided the Gallery, if not to become the future basis, at least to form a solid and permanent portion of the foundation, of our future public or national taste in works of Art. Will my readers do me the honour to regard the statement of this simple postulate, as a satisfactory reason for my attempting and here submitting, the first volume of a Catalogue of the contents of that National Gallery; which Catalogue I have ventured to call descriptive, explanatory, and critical? It would not become me to anticipate what the answer to this question will be. I am content to wait for it with due resignation and respect; and meanwhile shall take on myself the hazard of proceeding with the second volume.

Not that by the above assertion of the solidity of these materials of national taste, I mean that the Gallery *yet* consists of, or abounds with, pictures of quite first rate pretension (though it certainly contains some of that pre-eminent description); or, that if it did, it would be thoroughly philosophical to regard even pictures of the highest class, as absolute standards of perfection. Young as the world is, it is getting too old for the prevalence of such doctrine. But they are the best—indeed the only standards we have, or can have; and are therefore to be regarded as works, which, like those of the great poets and historians of antiquity, have been consecrated by long-continued admiration. The principal pictures in our National Collection are hallowed by the homage of centuries; and have consequently a similar claim with the classics, to

influence our judgment, and conduce to the formation of our taste, in all that is within the boundaries of their province; while, by their charming influence, they enable us to look beyond those boundaries at the beauties of Nature herself, through a serene and blessed medium, derived, or resulting, from the accumulated judgment and experience of the best artists and critics of past ages, practically and permanently displayed. By which I do not mean to imply, that the works of *the best* artists of the *present* age, are not equally instructive, or worthy of attention, if the public had equal opportunity of profiting by them; which it has not, for of modern pictures (unless for those who can afford to purchase such) we get only a glance, and they are gone. They "come like shadows—so depart;" while the National Gallery is intended to be permanent and perennial, so that the public mind may there luxuriate, and dwell, and reflect upon; or at its pleasure, revisit, what is there repositied. The National Gallery thus becomes the nursery of the Public Taste. But would it not be far more effectively so, if at least a few more of the best pictures of our own school and our own age, found places there? And would not the leading spirits of the present age, as well as of posterity, rejoice in a favourable opportunity of instituting such comparisons as, while they operated as a perpetual stimulus to professional exertion, might satisfactorily show the advancement or retrogradation, and the occasional aberrations, both of Taste and of practical Art.

But a more unfortunate predicament, if not for our present enjoyment and the existing state of Art, yet for the *progress* of Public Taste, has proceeded from our innate love, or the habits into which our fellow countrymen have allowed themselves to be insensibly seduced, of submitting to the arbitrary influence of *transient novelty*, in all that concerns Fine Art; as if attention, even to such matters, took its ostensible tone from fashionable frivolity; as if a glance, or a five minutes gaze, at a picture which has, perhaps, taken a first rate artist more than as many months to paint, were quite sufficient for us to derive from it all the enjoyment or edification that such a work is capable of imparting.

Since the works contained in the National Gallery are of a character to *deserve*, they should *receive*, more than such transient attention. The production of my Catalogue

rests entirely on this belief, and the reliance we ought to have on principle. Concerning a certain book which I once sent to De Louthembourg, he wrote me as follows, "I see by the first sentence, it is not a work for pastime or temporary regard, I will therefore not only peruse, but *read* it attentively." Now this is precisely what I think due to the pictures in the National Gallery (with a few exceptions). They are not works for *mere* cursory amusement. There is ample opportunity—and it should not be lost—of dwelling upon whatever picture, or pictures, may tone with the visiter's present taste or mood, and of re-inspecting the collection, without stint or limit. They are worthy of such revisitation; and many of them of being perused or *read* with that degree of mental application which we term study. And it is with the view of inciting my readers to the pleasure of dwelling thus, for their own enjoyment, upon the beauties and merits of these pictures, that I have adventured this volume.

Being not altogether conventional, I do not go exactly with the stream of fashion, and shall therefore, I suppose, at least on some points, be liable to reprehension from the stream-goers, particularly if I should declare my fears that posterity will regard the present, as rather too much of an amused and amusing age.—Too much of an age which acquiesces in the idea that those who have the means, possess the right, of wasting life in idle pastime. Without invoking Adversity, I am apt to think that

Self-pleasing folly's idle brood,
Who have not leisure to be good,

are precisely the description of people that enjoy the least, not only of pictures, but of all pleasurable things. However, if we can arouse slumbering Taste, and so bridle Attention as to restrain its vapid ramblings, it will probably be the best repression of dissipation and ennui; and for the present, I will endeavour to restrict my consideration to the National Gallery—and not to be too didactic.—

The governor of the disloyal island of Barataria was, not without reason, dissatisfied that his delicious viands flew away at the magical touch of his medical philosopher: but Governor Bull—unlike his amicable and discerning brother Sancho—has permitted himself to be wheedled into acquiescence in the vapid and *tasteless* custom, and

seems in some danger of settling into habitual satisfaction with his transient glances at works of Art, provided his eyes are feasted with a novel succession or shifting of the scenery, sufficiently rapid to amuse him, and that he beholds No. 2 approaching, or present, before No. 1 is out of sight.

It is, presumptively, this hasty changing of the scenes, in consequence of the mercenary root of estimation, and even of existence, to which everything in our Mammon-island is doomed,—unless we shall be enabled to except the National Gallery and the British Museum—It is—at least in some measure, this haste, where pecuniary and mental profit stand opposed to each other, that has given such a careless, flippant, superficial, temporary, touch-and-go, air and character, to the printed notices—sometimes with temerarious and unblushing stolidity or effrontery called “Critical Dissertations” on works of Art, (including the National Gallery,) which abound in the periodical publications, and which have reduced and degraded the art or science of picture-criticism to a state so discredibly low, at the very time when sound and accurate criticism is most especially wanted. “*Doctor Aguero* Tirteafuera*, who (as we are informed by Cervantes) has a salary for taking care of the governor’s health, and is consequently more careful of it than of his own,” has been as successful in persuading his English patient of the propriety and wisdom of his appointment and his ministration, as in the potent touch of his whalebone wand; and who is to countervail his proceedings, if the lord governor is satisfied to allow his most exquisite dishes to fly from before him, and “that he is to feast no otherwise than according to the use and custom of other islands where there are governors.”

What is meant to be seriously asserted here, is, that the mercenary basis, propped, and buttressed, and shored up, as it is by, and combined as it is with, the delusive persuasion which seems to possess so many of those who can hold a pen and can reach down a dictionary or vocabulary—that they may leap on almost the loftiest of literary pedestals, and stand forth as critics in pictures,—ought not to be longer tolerated. As Sir Martin Shee has long since observed, these obtrusive *Magni Apollines*, having thus

* According to the learned Cid Hamet Benengeli, or his thrice-learned commentators, Aguero, means *positive of the omen*, and Tirteafuera, *take yourself away*.

leaped and presented themselves, may not complain if their attitudes and proportions should be examined and criticised in their turn; or if, on being found glaringly defective, they should be hooted down from a station which they have so unnecessarily and injudiciously assumed.

They have indeed ensconced themselves—but it is behind a fortification of wood: and we must allow that their literary scaffolding is syllogistically constructed, and exceedingly *self*-convincing: “As Art reflects Nature, through Nature it must be judged: we can all of us see Nature: a dignitary of the church, even before he has hurt his sight by crooked Greek and small Hebrew, cannot see more of her than a carman or a coal-porter; nor is an illiterate mechanic less sensible of her charms.” Ergo, we are *all* qualified—*all* critics in beauty: which is certainly very flattering and acceptable information to all who have pence to purchase, or pens to proclaim, the penny wisdom. If further, some of us are pre-eminently qualified, because we can cut jokes, and put money in our purses by dismissing a picture with a pun—but let us keep that matter to ourselves.—

Now, who is to undertake the invidious office, or task, of showing how false and hollow is the Belial eloquence of these specious pretenders, and that behind their *wood*-work there is no solid masonry? Luckily the least exceptionable refutation of the theory of these picture-critics, and their tribe of puffers, is to be found in their own practice. You have but to draw aside a flimsy veil, and they themselves exhibit the unsoundness of their pretensions: the utter worthlessness; the worse than nothingness, of their own contemptible literary babble.

In a few instances out of many that would have tempted me, had the exposure of obtrusive effrontery been more than a collateral purpose, I have ventured on this unveiling, as the reader will find in those pages wherein I have endeavoured to vindicate Poussin, Titian, and some other distinguished artists, from the misinterpretations of purblind presumption: and I would have proceeded further with this wholesome exposure (as I trust it will prove), had I not been somewhat apprehensive that too many flickering agitations, might disturb the repose of my picture of THE NATIONAL GALLERY—which is our proper subject. Whether such exposure will prove sufficient, or insufficient, remains to be seen.

To lead, cherish, exalt, and refine, that public Taste

which the mercenary tribe would follow, flatter, debase, and corrupt, is the ostensible, and who can doubt that it is the real, object, of those gentlemen who have projected, and those who have so handsomely and so patriotically contributed to the formation of, a National Gallery. Pictures are repositied there for the edification, as well as for the entertainment, or superficial and temporary gratification of that public. Of course, the more of refined pleasure and instruction that can be extracted or obtained from them, the better for the people. But if some should lend a willing ear to our cajoling picture-jokers, who are of the same tribe with those sanguine philosophers that would insist upon our inferring that Intellect is marching and Happiness is advancing in England with giant strides, because steam-enginery has put on her seven-league boots, and money is accumulating in certain quarters; will not the more wise and wary among us, at least, be led to doubt whether it be the same in matters of Taste?

Seeing that corrupt puffery has here usurped the tribunal of criticism, who will assert that we have no reasonable ground for apprehending danger to Fine Art and its votaries? or that we do not, in such matters, actually experience that worst of evils, the influence of ignorant despotism? Or who will believe that British vigilance and prudence, should allow themselves to be lulled into false security in what concerns the just appreciation and national enjoyment of such works?

"Stars *teach* as well as shine," saith the poet. Alas! for the stars of Art, when those who undertake to point the telescope, and tell us *what* they teach; how they are constellated; which are the planets; the orbits in which they revolve; and their relative magnitudes and influences, —do but raise clouds to obstruct our perceptions, and obscure their splendour. Alas! that criticism on the Arts should, in England, be at its lowest ebb, precisely when a National Gallery is forming, and when the operation of sound criticism on the public Taste, is most wanted.

To see Pictures is to enjoy them. True: but then they should be viewed by the mind's eye. Then—as sings he who "*rose to truth and moralised his song,*"

"God is paid when man receives:
To enjoy is to obey."

But then man *should* receive, or he cannot obey or enjoy: in order to which he should read, mark, learn, and inwardly

digest. Unjust criticisms, or bad copies of any kind from such exemplary works as are contained in the National Gallery—it may be thought by those who reflect but little, ~~are~~, in their consequences, only like bad editions of the consecrated classics: they do no harm to the divine originals: they detract not from their great merits, and long established fame.—But, no! that is not exactly the case. They do the same injury to the *reputation* of the originals, and subtract as much from the great benefits they are capable of conferring, as would injudicious or mistaken comments upon, or bad translations of, Homer or Virgil, Eschylus or Sophocles. They do the same harm that the prevalence of blighting exhalations do to our vernal hopes in May; which hurt not the Sun, it is true; but effectually preclude us from enjoying his genial influence, precisely when it would most benefit mankind.

Wherefore, with regard to ignorant and empirical pretenders to picture criticism:—bold vocabulists, who imagine that they may expediently dispense with truth, if they have but semblance: or forego the real, if they possess but the apparent—with regard to men, who (in the words of the patriarch of old) “darken wisdom, by words without knowledge”—I have not dissembled much; nor shall I insidiously or hypocritically pretend to quote scripture, and say “those whom I *love*, I rebuke and chasten.” No. If I shall in any degree find myself fortunate enough to rebuke and chasten those who rush into the temples of Taste, where angels and hierophants tread cautiously, it will have been because I love *the Arts*, and regard such reckless individuals as I would false direction-posts, which would conduct us into devious paths when we are seeking the direct road to Zion, or the Parthenon; and which it is, therefore, public duty either to remove or convert into useful indices. He who sincerely loves the Arts, cannot love also those who by specious semblances obstruct any portion of the social good they are capable of imparting.

When Lucian undertakes to plead in behalf of Rectitude against certain pretended philosophers, he institutes a sort of previous examination into his own qualifications and motives. Philosophy herself is supposed to address him, and the following dialogue takes place.

P. What is your profession? for that is a circumstance I must be informed of.

L. I am the declared enemy of all false pretence ; all quackery ; all lies, and all puffing : I hate from the bottom of my heart, all and every one who belongs to that infamous tribe—as you know full well.

P. By Hercules ! you follow a most invidious profession !

L. But too true. You see how many enemies I have made by it, and to what perils I am obnoxious on that account ; notwithstanding that I also carry on the clean contrary profession : which consists in affection, with equally great diligence and industry ; for I am a lover of Truth, of Beauty, of undisguised Nature—in short, of every thing that is lovely. Unhappily, few there are upon whom I can put my talent of loving in practice : whereas those who are qualified for hatred, are as thousands to one. I am, therefore, actually in danger of losing all my skill in the former ; but in the latter, of becoming more expert than I desire.

P. No fear of that. For *to love, and to hate, spring from one and the same source* : you are therefore wrong in making two businesses of them, since, *in fact, they are only one*. [This is probably the best illustration that is anywhere extant of Dr. Johnson's and Hazlitt's avowal of being "good haters," and the best explanation of the paradox.]

L. That, O Philosophy ! must be best known to you : my business is to *hate the bad*, and to *love and commend the good*,—and that I stick to.

P. Well : we are now come to the place appointed. Here, under the portico of Minerva, will be the most convenient situation for our present affair.

Now, one may follow a classic exemplar without pretending to vie with him in talent ; and the portico of *Minerva* is not impertinent to our present purpose :—on the contrary, it is rather appropriate, since, although Sculpture, Music, Poetry—every Art save Painting, has an appropriate Muse ;—the manifestation of Nature, and of intellect operating upon Nature—by *means of form and colour*, is derived immediately from the *Goddess of Wisdom herself* ! Not that she used pigments and pencils (any more than Miss Linwood) that we ever heard of. Her fall of the Giants [the painter's prototype] was *embroidered*, as we are taught to believe. Pigments, pencils, and palette,

are only the best *mortal* and *terrestrial* mode that has yet been discovered, of imitating her immortal and celestial example. She is, nevertheless, the inventress and patron deity of the art of imitating visible objects by *means* of form and colour, which is a true definition of Painting.—But we are not at present called upon to pursue further this antiquarian research into the classical origin of the Art of the Painter.

Concerning the *arrangement* of this Catalogue, and the order of succession which it has been found eligible to adopt—as something beyond mere cursory gratification has been kept in view—*Chronological sequence*, as nearly as attendant circumstances would admit—as I fancied that this would best illustrate the *progress* of painting—has guided me, with the exception of Coreggio's "School of Cupid" and "Ecce Homo!" which, coming too late for this, have been placed among the Claudes.

In being more diffuse and particular than is now fashionable among "graphic writers," or picture-critics, I trust I shall not be found to have digressed *much* into unessential matters; or to have illustrated any of the great masters into obscurity, as has been the reproach of some of Shakespeare's commentators. Should any of my readers of superior taste and intelligence, say, Why are you thus prolix in dwelling upon what we plainly see? Or, should those who follow the picture-jokers, and look at such works for mere momentary amusement, ask, Why these numerous details, as if you were establishing facts upon legal evidence? Why are you so tediously particular?—I should answer to both, Descriptive Catalogues are rather for those who of themselves discern but little in pictures, than for those who see much. "Verily I say unto you, the whole need not the physician." Moreover, as we cannot adapt the same book to the varying taste and knowledge of our readers severally, we are necessarily constrained to assume some kind of average in these respects, and endeavour to pitch our speculations and the information we wish to impart, toward the level of that average. I may have assumed it too high: or perhaps too low. But before I proceed far with my concluding volume, I shall probably be able (from some symptoms or other) to discover whether the judicious portion of my readers, are *least*, or *most*, pleased with those criticisms of mine, which

have run out to the greatest length—of which discovery, I shall not fail to avail myself, so as to share the benefit with those readers.

Most of the few technical words which I have had occasion to employ—such as *drawing*, *keeping*, *composition*, *chiar-oscuro*—are, I believe, generally, and familiarly understood, having been repeatedly and ably defined in dictionaries and other books that have been long before the public. Yet there are two terms of Art—*character* and *expression*, that are very frequently confounded, not merely in colloquial chat, but by those men of words, some of whom affect to condemn “the *slang* of the studio, and conventional phrases of the children of St. Luke.” Concerning these, it appears necessary, or at least not objectionable, that I should submit a few sentences, which will, at the same time, require me, in the way of illustration, to treat of a picture or two in the National Gallery by Sir Joshua Reynolds, apart from their chronological place and claims; which, as the Gallery does not yet contain anything like a regular, orderly, series, will amount to no unpardonable violation of the right that every artist, of every age, may reasonably claim from those who minister in the temple of Taste, to have his works regarded with a general reference to the coexisting state of art at the era of their production.

The friends, or conservators of the fame, of Sir Joshua—should we lift a picture or two of his, into our Preface—will have no great reason to take umbrage, if we state that they afford us the most pertinent examples, or at least the best subjects of experimental illustration, of the terms which we wish to illustrate. The Gallery is sufficiently rich in the works of this artist, for him to spare the transposition of two heads, without detriment to that closing part of our Catalogue, which will include our estimate—or as much of it as we may feel called upon to offer—of his professional merits, as compared with those of his contemporaries of the eighteenth century. Reynolds will still occupy an illustrious niche in our artistical pantheon.—With this exception, and that of the two recently acquired Coreggio's, I have adhered, as nearly as was practicable, to the chronological order of sequence.

AN OLD MAN'S HEAD IN PROFILE.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

IN conformity with the inscription beneath the picture, we have called this a profile: but it is not exactly a profile, the face being somewhat averted. It is *nearly* a side view, with the countenance and eyes inclining upward, of a fine grey and grizzle-headed old man—gaunt, bearded, and romanesque—whom Sir Joshua met with accidentally, a mendicant in the street. The President, struck with the picturesque character of his head, and its suitability for an historical work which he was probably contemplating at the time, took him home, and painted from him—not the present study alone, but various other views of his remarkable countenance: and he afterward served as the model for a head of *Cartouche* the robber, and for that of Count *Ugolino*, in the picture which is so much and so justly admired at Knole Park, and which was not very long since exhibited, to the great delight of the public, at the British Gallery.

We here behold the model draped ideally in dark crimson; and it is not improbable that the work before us is the very study which Reynolds first painted of this sharp-featured, and seemingly ill-fed, veteran—perhaps before he had settled the composition of his *Ugolino*, or made up his mind, whether to introduce the old man *en profile*, or represent that front view of his features on which he has superinduced a sublime *expression* of utter hopelessness melting into religious or philosophical resignation, and carrying its meditations beyond this world: an

expression which rivets the attention both of the studious, and the careless, observer.

He who desires to engage in such study, may here contemplate Sir Joshua's model in the abstract, unmodified by those temporal and external circumstances of costume and passionate *expression*, which make all the difference between a humble beggar; an incarcerated nobleman; and a resolute, if not ferocious, bandit chief.

Comparing this head with the mezzotinto print of "Cartouche," or with Raimbach's fine engraving from the picture in the Dorset Collection, the studious painter, or attentive connoisseur, perceives how the hand and mind of the artist proceeded, in converting the patient, enduring, but energetic, old mendicant, into the stern and stratagestic robber, or the imprisoned and despairing parent, unforsaken by fortitude as his agonised sons perish miserably around him.

As there is allowed to be "a pleasure in madness, which none but madmen know;" so it is with connoisseurs in the Fine Arts: and it is principally to such, or those who would become such, that I address the few following paragraphs on that technical, or critical, use of the terms CHARACTER and EXPRESSION, which, unless my intention slip from me, will be found running through this volume, since I am not likely to meet with much better illustrations than the present head, and the remarkable physiognomy of "The Banished Lord," which follows, with some others in the National Gallery to which I shall also advert, afford, of marking and fixing this necessary distinction, once for all. If I should be found employing terms of importance, loosely or vaguely, it will be quite unintentional on my part. I could wish to be regarded with a certain degree of critical

accuracy throughout, even though I know that to make this avowal may be expected to expose me to strict observation—perhaps to severity. But of that degree of intentness, and pleasurable accuracy of observation, of which the sense of vision is but the medium, which I am here inculcating, I shall not of course complain, when it is justly exercised. I shall neither have the wish, nor the skill, nor shall have left myself the power.

Now, excepting in those unintelligent, no-meaning, apathetic countenances, from which attention and human interest incontinently avert themselves; there is, in every cast of human features, more or less of *character*, even when they are in a tranquil or placid state. *Character* differs from *expression*, therefore, (with which it is not unfrequently confounded,) as being only a passive capability of expressing—What?—Passion, and the gentler Emotions. It does not amount to *expression* till it engages our sympathy by actually and unequivocally denoting

“ Love, Hope, or Joy—fair Pleasure’s smiling train :
Hate, Fear, or Grief—the family of Pain :”

or some modifications, or mixture, of these.

Hence, persons of taste are not unfrequently heard to say of such heads as the present, from the pencil of Reynolds, or that of the Banished Lord which shall follow; or of Vandyck’s *Gevartius* (which now hangs very apropos for critical observation,) that they are “ PREGNANT *with meaning* ;” or, more colloquially, that they are “ *full of character* .”

And certainly there is something in this *capability* of expressing, more impressively and profoundly interesting—we had nearly written, than Beauty itself! because human beauty cannot be mentally touching ;

or (in the language of poetry) reach the heart, without it. The arrows of Love are not *barbed* by mere conventional beauty, but by individual peculiarity, or lovely and inviting traits of *character*: a principle which I have endeavoured to illustrate and exemplify in my remarks on the chaste Susanna of Lodovico Caracci. As regards the human face divine, the essence of character is a sort of electric* fluid, which—playing through the atmosphere of human affections—excites, thrills, and sparkles, as it unites material loveliness with immateriality; or mind with matter. Eyes cannot “rain influence,” or hope to be appointed to judge or award “the prize of wit or arms,” without partaking of this ethereal essence. There is something therefore in character, entitling it to claim collateral alliance with the sublime class of our improved perceptions—something approximating to what we esteem *deific*, or Godlike. Why?—Because power without passion is deific, in all its manifestations.

But I expatiate perhaps unnecessarily; certainly at some hazard, since all metaphysical speculations are hazardous. To be more concise: *Character* is that which is always present in a head which possesses this painter's index or element—this pivot of human interest—even in its quiescent state. *Expression*, varying with externals, is only there when it is incidentally called forth by the exciting circumstances in which the mind and person of its possessor is placed by present events. CHARACTER, as it respects physiognomy, resides principally in the stationary—the solid, parts—or *bones*: EXPRESSION, in the *muscles*, or moveable parts. In the old beggar there is more of *character*. In the Banished Lord, there is

* The chemical philosophers have lately satisfied us that what is *electric* is also *magnetic*.

a *preponderance of expression*. In both, these are blended in their existence; and the expression of the latter, though not pure and simple enough to serve as a perfect and pertinent elucidation of what I would here explain, goes far towards it.

THE BANISHED LORD.

SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

THIS picture (presented to the National Gallery by the Rev. William Long) has been called "The Banished Lord." It is so designated beneath a mezzotinto engraving of it, that was published some years ago; and, as we deem, very pertinently;—though not—as the printed catalogues, and other publications, have stated—"on account of the melancholy cast of the countenance." The shade of melancholy is but faint. No. It has been so denominated because of the untrimmed beard; the neglected state of apparel, evidently put on under prosperous circumstances; and the general wild air of the head. There is loftiness of pretension in the eye and forehead; and altogether, a sense of unjust treatment, and an unsubdued spirit, is expressed in this boldly painted bust—which is worthy of its place in the National Collection, as an object of solitary musing, and because of the congenial energy, which there is both pleasure and profit in tracing, between the style of art, and the subject which the artist has here adopted. It appears not at all unlikely that this, as well as the Old Man's Head which we have just passed, has been a study from Nature, done whilst the materials for the historical picture of the

Incarceration of Count Ugolino and his Family, were collecting and concocting.

Something there is in the former of suffering—a sort of tacit and reluctant acknowledgment—about the mouth: and the space between the nose and mouth (owing to the individual peculiarity of the model,) seems somewhat more considerable than symmetry, or perfect harmony of parts, would admit of: but—as you gaze, cover up the mouth, and—what do you perceive? A clear open brow; a consciousness of rectitude; a sensation of unjust suffering; a Regulus, or Caius-Marius-like air. Assuredly it is a “banished Lord.” It bears the character of a man of noble mind, suffering under unjust expatriation, but not depressed by *melancholy*. On the contrary—“Godlike erect, in native honour clad,”—there is that in his eye which proudly anticipates triumphant return.

Of this vigorous head—speaking technically, and with some reference to the definitions I have ventured—I should say that it is elevated in *character*; and that the *expression* is somewhat dissonant and deteriorating. In the shape of the mouth there is something, not merely unyielding, but rather brutally so: and with this tinge of brutality, there is mingled a reflex of misery. There is beside, a degree of meanness in the formation of the, rather too small, nose, which the mezzotinto engraver, who called it a Banished Lord, has in some measure amended. The character is altogether better in the print, than in the picture. Though we cannot say of the Banished Lord, as of Hamlet,

“Oh! what a noble mind is here o’erthrown,”

yet is it in some degree debased, although not sub-

duced. The noble mind has been coerced: *acted upon*: but in as far as it retains its original purpose, and power of reaction, it will vindicate its claims. And this lofty consciousness of honour, almost unblemished, resides chiefly in the eyes and forehead. The nose, (as is observed above,) is not so large and significant as to harmonize with the open brow.

Howsoever mingled, or blended, in their pictorial existence, I conceive that *character* and *expression*, like compound colours, are susceptible of being traced to their primary elements, and separately ascertained. And concerning this point of the critical philosophy of historical painting, my readers will perceive, by what follows, that I have the honour of coinciding with the latest and best historian of Italian Art.

“ Critics have often expressed a wish (he says) that these heads [of St. Cecilia and certain Madonnas, from the pencil of Raphael] had possessed a more dignified CHARACTER; and in this respect he was perhaps excelled by Guido Reni; and however engaging his children may be, those of Titian are still more beautiful. His true empire was in the heads of his men, which are portraits selected with judgment, and depicted with a dignity proportioned to his subject.—

“ ——— Lionardo was the first, as we shall see in the Milanese school, to lead the way to *delicacy* of EXPRESSION; but that master, who painted so little, and with such labour, is not to be compared to Raffaele, who possessed the whole quality in its fullest extent. There is not a movement of the human soul—capable of being expressed by art—that he has not caught, expressed, and varied, in a thousand different ways, and always within the bounds of propriety.

“ Nature had endowed him with an imagination

which transported his mind to the scene of the event, either fabulous or remote, on which he was engaged, and awoke in him the very same emotions which the subjects of ~~such story must themselves have experienced~~; and this vivid conception assisted him until he had designed his subject with that distinctness which he had either observed in other countenances, or found in his own mind. This faculty, seldom found in poets, and still more rarely in painters, no one possessed in a more eminent degree than Raffaele. His figures are passions personified: and Love, Fear, Hope and Desire, Anger, Placability, Humility or Pride, assume their places by turns as the subject changes.

“There is another *delicacy* of *Expression*: and this is the *gradation* of the *Passions*, by which every one perceives, whether they are in their commencement, or at their height, or in their decline. He had observed their shades of difference in the intercourse of life, and on every occasion he knew how to transfer the result of his observations to his canvas.

“The smallest perceptible motion of the eyes, of the nostrils, of the mouth, and of the fingers, corresponds to the chief movements of every passion; the most animated and vivid actions discover the violence of the passion that excites them; and, what is more, they vary in innumerable *degrees*, without ever departing from Nature, and conform themselves to a *diversity* of CHARACTER without ever risking propriety.”—*Roscoe's Translation*.

Thus far Lanzi. From the head of Rembrandt's Hebrew Adultress, though it be small, some illustrative light is thrown on the object of our present inquiry. Here, though the *character* is unelevated, the contrite *expression* is exceedingly to the purpose.

And, without forgetting that we have already referred the reader to Reynolds's Ugolino as a **pertinent illustration of expression**, when compared with the **unimpassioned CHARACTER of the same head**: we may also, since our recent acquisition of the Londonderry treasures of Art, refer him to Coreggio's extraordinary heads of the Madonna and of Jesus Christ: the former as the finest example probably in the world, of the true expression of overwhelming maternal sorrow—so true that it makes the **work of most other artists look but like grimace in the comparison**: the latter as a super-eminent and exquisite instance, expressing with supreme **resignation**, boundless and divine philanthropy **triumphing over human suffering**, together with all **other temporal considerations**; and discriminating and denoting deific power, by its placid elevation above human passion. The expression of latent power, though it be—as it can only be—but **delicately indicated**, is always more sublime than that of power in action, as respects the human face divine; because, of the latter we seem to behold the limit, while of the former, as we do not, it partakes of the infinite and ineffable.

This fine head affords a more pertinent and satisfactory example of sublime *expression* superinduced on divinely elevated *character*, than is to be met with elsewhere in the National Gallery—or out of it, I should perhaps have ventured to add, were I not restrained by the reflection that those critics who have not visited Italy, must seem deficient in privilege to write thus positively on such a topic. Professor Phillips has brought us home, a head copied by himself from one of Michael Angelo's Sibyls, by which it evidently appears that the engravings pub-

lished after this exemplary original, are far—very far, from conveying an adequate idea of its grandeur. It is at once so mystical and prophetic in its *expression*, that a poet would almost swear Pope must have been sitting before it when he commenced his Messiah—so admirably does it express the sentiment “Rapt into future times:” and this sentiment is not—like Rembrandt’s expression of contrition—superinduced on a common frail female; but on a chaste Cassandra-like *character* of feminine energy that is in complete accordance with it.

The reader will probably pardon, if he should not approve, the rather long, but I trust not impertinent, illustration from Lanzi, and from the practice and discrimination of Raphael—in the productions of whose *pencil* we are as yet so comparatively poor—of the technic or proper use of two terms of Art, which by cursory critics and observers are so frequently confounded.

I have further to apologize for a short repetition or two, the same ideas having incontinently recurred to me in treating of similar matters, but where a more thorough paced writer than myself would have studiously avoided the employment of the same words. I believe the chief of these is the re-introduction of those fine, original, and expressive, verses from the pen of Keats, where Wisdom and Truth hath met together, and Taste and Philosophy have kissed each other, which I could not forbear to adopt as a general motto, although I had previously quoted them in the body of my volume. I must trust to their pertinence to plead my excuse.

J. L.

A

DESCRIPTIVE, EXPLANATORY, AND CRITICAL
CATALOGUE, &c.

JESUS CHRIST ARGUING IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

(DESIGNED AND PROBABLY PAINTED BY)

LIONARDO DA VINCI.

THIS admirable, and carefully preserved picture, has generally been designated "*Christ disputing with the Doctors*;" and more recently "*Christ reasoning with the Pharisees*." But the Saviour is here represented as too old for that first-recorded manifestation of his divine powers, which it will be remembered took place at the age of twelve years, when his mother, after three days' search, discovered her son in the Temple of *Jerusalem* disputing with the Rabin. He has here attained to manhood; and as his auditors do not seem like conceited, self-important hypocrites—such as were the *Pharisees*—but rather like a miscellaneous assemblage, some of whose minds, at least, may be supposed to be open to conviction, we have ventured to entitle the picture as above, *Jesus Christ arguing in the Synagogue*, to which he was used occasionally to resort, as we learn from the text, "When he was come into his *own country*, (of Nazareth,) he taught them in the *Synagogue*, insomuch that they were astonished! and said one to another, Whence hath this *man* his wisdom, and his mighty works?" If the picture be meant to

illustrate any particular text, (as probably it is,) it appears to be that which we have cited above from St. Matthew, the Saviour having evidently attained to manhood, and his audience being miscellaneous.

There are who suppose, from the action of his hands, that Lionardo intended we should understand that his Christ was here explaining the mystery of the Holy Trinity: but, as logicians who would steer clear of any dangerous dilemma, do not unfrequently employ their fingers thus methodically as they proceed in their demonstrations, it is submitted that Jesus Christ arguing in the Synagogue (at Nazareth) will on the whole prove a preferable title to either of those which are mentioned above.

The countenances of those who are listening to the divine Teacher—at least three out of the four who are here depicted—exhibit more attention, than pertinacity. The nearest of the bearded elderly figures, holds up his hand with the thumb and finger elevated, as if noting some passage or expression in the argument adduced, on which he wishes for further information, or concerning which he reserves, and will offer, some objection. The front-faced figure beyond him, who seems pondering, is perhaps intended for one of the sect of Sadducees who professed to disbelieve the immortality of the soul, but whose faith may well be supposed to be a little shaken by what he hears: he is evidently an attentive, and an unprejudiced, listener.

Concerning the defects of the picture:—The shadows of the flesh are perhaps too brown for Nature; yet, from this obscurity, the lights derive a degree of brilliancy. The bearded figure who wears the frontlet, has no Hebrew text or adage displayed on it, such as

were at the time common on the phylacteries of the Pharisees, and such as Rubens, with due attention to costume, has introduced in his "Woman detected in Adultery," and as Raphael has hinted at in his cartoon of Ananias and Sapphira; and the jewelled bosom-border of the vest, in which Christ is habited, is perhaps in its pattern too Milanese and *Cinquecento*, and, studded as it is with rubies and other precious gems, is too rich in ornament, for the humble birth and terrestrial pretensions of the son of Joseph the carpenter. But these are trifles—hypercriticisms perhaps—

"Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow :
He who would search for pearls must dive below."

All the heads introduced, including that of Jesus Christ himself, appear to be portraits of individuals, very little, if at all, idealised. The Christ is meek, unassuming, beneficent, far removed from the faintest shade of human arrogance: his eyes tell of divine intelligence; his hair is parted over his forehead conformably to ancient and accredited descriptions of his person; and Da Vinci has boldly dispensed with the customary halo, or head-encircling light, which, among the Italian saint-painters and their patrons, having previously been regarded as the conventional sign of sacredness or divinity, had spared the Cimabues and Giotto the trouble of writing, and the majority of their contemporaries the greater trouble of reading, "This is a saint." Relying, like any other professed teacher of wisdom, on the simple truths he unfolded, and in no degree presuming on the sacredness of his own character and mission, Lionardo's Christ has a noble amplitude of forehead,

a well-formed nose, and in the *tout ensemble* of his countenance there is a decided and considerable advancement from the art of preceding ages toward that ineffability which belongs to the mild, and passionless, and peaceful, energies of Jesus Christ; yet, *as he is here the speaker, his lips should surely have been apart*. This closed mouth is a more important defect in the picture, than either of those which we have intimated above: and, on the whole, critics will perhaps, after due acknowledgment of its merits, deem this face to be somewhat deficient in divine elevation of character, although exquisitely wrought up in respect of light, shade, colour, and careful blandishment.

Notions of pictorial abstractions, central forms, and ideal beauty, such as have resounded through the academies of Europe during the last century, had not during the age of Da Vinci begun, or were but just beginning, to disclose themselves. All that an artist sought, was to select and combine those features or passages of Nature which were best suited to any given historical or poetical occasion: more than which is not here attempted.

Of the possible painted and sculptured heads of Jesus Christ, I have formerly written that they could only be exalted above those of all individual men, by possessing what is common to all good men in character and expression: but I am now uncertain whether such a compound abstraction be practicable in Art: whether, if it be, it would appear at once human and deific; or excite the exalted, yet humble and meek, idea which attaches to the character of Christ.

Such ideas, however, did begin to obtain among

the artists of Italy soon after the era of the resurrection of the Antique Sculpture. Wondering *how* the Greeks could have attained to such superlative beauty and grandeur as are displayed in their works, the then modern artists sought for it in theory, and credulously listened to the stories of Phidias copying Homer, rather than Nature, in modelling his Olympian Jupiter; to that of the six selected beauties who are said to have sat to Zeuxis for his Helen: and, to the modern prevalence of this supposed, and perhaps real, ancient creed, we owe the Jesus Christ of Poussin, resembling a youthful Jupiter, and the still more abstracted or generalised Saviour of Coreggio and the Caraccii, which is perhaps better than Da Vinci's, Michael Angelo's, Poussin's, or even Raphael's—with the exception of his beatified and deific head of the *transfigured* Saviour, which is so justly admired.

But the *opinions* on this point, as well as the *practice* of the ancients, is desirable. Now it sometimes happens that a single phrase of a good writer, lets us into the knowledge of a principle; and—that the critical literature of the ancients, as well as their Fine Art—or, at least, that some of its professors, as well as some of the moderns, were possessed with the notion of ideal forms, if not of their superiority over those of selected nature; and the practicability of rendering them perceptible to sense—we may gather from the learned Proclus' mention of "*brain-born images*."

Reynolds, however, unhesitatingly promulgated, expanded, and enforced, the principle of exploring central forms through means of ideal and pictorial abstractions, but has, notwithstanding, virtually coun-

tervailed his own and Du Fresnoy's doctrine, by showing, in another part of his writings, that the theoretic power of generalising, was in fact selection from Nature, and not any mental elaboration of her essence. The reason, he says, why a botanist, or a naturalist, in quest of botanic beauty, throws aside all those leaves and flowers which are marked by individual imperfections, and dwells with rapture on such as, by retaining the generic form, are free from these individualities, is precisely the same as the artist's; *ergo*, the painter has only to select, like the botanist. And since the importation of the Elgin marbles, and as the casts made by Mr. Chantrey from Wilson the black, were so justly admired, and admired because they resembled the best Greek sculpture, this faith has generally prevailed amongst artists and connoisseurs. That it will finally and permanently obtain, it would, in the present state of our knowledge and experience, be presumptuous either to pronounce or deny.

If the present head of Jesus Christ was copied from the best model Lionardo had been able to select from the portion of nature with which he was acquainted, our wonder should perhaps cease at his not being satisfied with its fitness for his more capital work of the Last Supper, at his consequent delay and hesitation, and at his finally leaving that head unfinished. But if our wonder ceases, our regret must begin; so much is there about this fine countenance of that mild but divine ineffability which is appropriate to the *Salvator Mundi*; though certainly it would have been too youthful for the Last Supper—that is quite obvious.

While we regret the omission, we admire the

susceptible and refined feeling which occasioned it. It would appear that at the time of painting his *chef d'œuvre*, a certain delicacy of taste, an apprehensiveness of offending the Divine Majesty of perfect Art, had fallen as a veil before his faculties, so far as concerned his practical talent, or had for the time, borne down the ambition of his professional energies; for his *Battle of the Standard*, evinces that on other occasions such energies were not wanting to Da Vinci.

Some modification of the same delicacy, pervades the present performance. In execution it far transcends all preceding and contemporaneous art; the forms of the details of an historical picture (with the trifling exceptions which are mentioned above) had nowhere else been so pure: and though three centuries and a half have elapsed since it was painted, we nowhere see the half tints of flesh more successfully incorporated with the warmer carnations, or draperies more ably cast, or more richly coloured, or wrought up to such high-toned, yet sober, harmony.

The public are indebted for this exemplary work to the munificence of the late Rev. W. H. Carr, into whose possession it came from the Aldobrandini Collection, which circumstance of itself appears to denote originality. On the other hand, Mr. Ottley states, that it "was the opinion of the Milanese painters whom he met with at Rome, that it was done, with the help of Lionardo's drawings, by one of a numerous school of skilful artists formed by him during his long residence at Milan."

Need we add that we do not attach so much weight to this vague opinion of the modern Milanese, as if Mr. Ottley had published it as the opinion

formed by *himself*; because we believe that he would not have hazarded such an opinion, without instituting the necessary comparisons, whilst residing in the land, and among the works, of Lionardo da Vinci.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL.

(PERHAPS BY)

ERCOLE OF FERRARA.

THE beginnings, should not be mistaken for the ends, of Art. Early and elaborate works, where the professor, dim-sighted to higher attainments, felt partly trammelled by what was then conventional; and partly at liberty to excel his predecessors and compeers by more laborious attention to the minutiae of nature than those predecessors and compeers had been able to display, are valuable as links, in concatenating the historical progress of Painting, without which the chain would necessarily be broken and imperfect. But, apart from this latter consideration, and viewed simply as *pictures*, these early performances are so inferior to works of subsequent production, that they call for indulgence and toleration, rather than appeal to any loftier sentiment.

A collection consisting entirely of such *curiosities* of Painting, must oppress the pictorial sense, or restrict it to the superstition of art, and the art of superstition: but in the National Gallery, placed as are these early productions of the Italian schools, and more particularly that of Ferrara, not far from the works of Rubens and Poussin, the juxta-position has

no useless influence upon our contemplations or our enjoyment. We can afford a few moments attention to elaborate gilding and enamelling; to extreme exactitude and toylike littleness; and to the legendary lore which once had the authority of gospel truth. While our self gratulations are thus honestly called forth, such a sprinkling of prosaic, or rather illiterate, *painter's work*—

“ Mocking the *art* with colours idly spread ”—

does not abate, but rather enhances, our reverence for the poetry of painting. To quote from a forgotten book—as we do not quarrel with Gower or Chaucer, because they have not the elegant perspicuity and polish of Pope, so we tolerate in these ancient works certain imperfections which are now palpable, but which were not palpable at the times when their authors lived; and regard them rather as resulting from the absence of knowledge, than the usurpations of ignorance, or the determinations of thought—always contemplating or interpreting them with a reference to the coexisting state of public taste and information, at the several times when they were respectively produced. Meanwhile we cannot but think there is something illiberal, and even morbid, in that taste, or connoisseurship (of which however the instances are far less numerous than formerly), which confines its appreciation and restricts its affections to those old and immature works, and will not condescend to look at any thing modern, or will affect condescension upon such occasions. It is not, however, necessary to dwell upon a mistaken preference which punishes itself.

Whether this Conversion of St. Paul be from the

pencil of Ercole of Ferrara, appears to be somewhat doubted, but there is no doubt that it is an early production of the Ferrarese school. Ercole *Grandi* (which latter was the patronymic name of this artist) flourished, from the middle till toward the close of the fifteenth century; studied under Lorenzo Costa of Ferrara, and soon learned to excel his master. He first became famous at Bologna, where, according to Lanzi, he produced a work which Albano has pronounced "equal to Mantegna, Pietro Perugino, or any artist who professed the modern antique style; nor perhaps did any boast a touch altogether so soft, harmonious, and refined. He painted to advance the art, and *spared neither time nor expense* to attain his object, employing seven years on his fresco histories at St. Peter's, and five more in retouching them when dry—but this was only at occasional intervals.

"In the chapel of Garganelli, Ercole painted, on one side, the Death of the Virgin; and on the other, the Crucifixion of Christ; nor did he produce, in such a variety, any one head like another. He also added a novelty in his draperies, a knowledge of foreshortening; and to his heads such an expression of passionate grief (says Vasari) as can scarcely be conceived. The soldiers are finely executed, with the most natural and appropriate action that any figures *up to that time* had displayed."

"Many years ago, when this chapel was taken down, as much as possible of Ercole's painting was preserved and placed on the wall of the Tanara palace, where it may still be seen. It is, indeed, his master-piece, and one of the most excellent that appeared in Italy during his time, in which the artist

seemed to have revived the example of Isocrates, who devoted so many years to the polish of his celebrated Panegyric."

"His picture of the Woman taken in Adultery, used to be pointed out in the Pitti palace for a work of Mantegna. For the rest his paintings are extremely rare, as he did not survive beyond his fortieth year, during which period he painted with the caution of a modest scholar, more than with the freedom of a master*."

On some points here is certainly resemblance, and on others none, between this description of Grandi's style of art, and the picture before us. The resemblance is with regard to the careful labour and revisal he bestowed on his work, his timidity, and his want of masterly freedom and vigorous cogitation. But Albano never could have thought this Conversion of St. Paul, equal to Andrea Mantegna—a bold and energetic artist; nor Lanzi, that its author painted to *advance* the art, but rather to retard it, unless it be a much earlier work than its apparent freshness appears to proclaim.

Mr. Ottley thinks, that "from the magnificence of Saul's armour, and the great number of his armed attendants, the picture, were it not for the figure of Christ in the clouds, might be supposed to represent the overthrow of the army of Sennacherib, rather than the conversion of the apostle of the Gentiles;" and there is much truth in the assertion, as well as some pleasantry in the equivoke: neither needs the figure of Jesus Christ to render this construction exceptionable; because the destruction of the Assyrian

* Lanzi's First Epoch of the School of Ferrara, vol. v. on the authority of Barufaldi.

host requires, or at least admits, the presence of such a supernatural apparition in the clouds.

The performance before us, which Mr. Carr obtained from the Aldobrandini Collection, certainly looks like a work done under the cloud of ignorance that overshadowed those middle ages which preceded the resurrection of the antique, and the Italian avatur of poetry ; and rather like a crowded *map* of Saint Paul's conversion, than like a *picture* of that subject—there being no expression of space, nor much of the conversion of a sinner to a saint : and the distant groves and suburbs of Damascus, or of Jerusalem (whichsoever be meant) appearing scarcely further from the spectator's eye, than the Christ-stricken persecutor, or proselyte, on the foreground.

The scriptural text from which it is ostensibly taken, is rather obscured, than illustrated, by this picture. Here is not the least sign or symptom of conversion on the part of Saul, who looks a little stupified indeed, but neither blinded, nor illumined with sudden and heaven-sent conviction. The sacred scribe informs us, that “ suddenly there shone round about Saul a light from heaven, and that he heard thence a voice.” Now here is no such supernatural *light* ; and though *sound* cannot be painted, yet a celestial verbal announcement may be indicated—as painters of genius have sometimes shewn us. On the present depicted occasion, if a voice,—an articulate voice,—might be fancied to proceed from Heaven, it could not possibly be heard by St. Paul, or any person else present in this assemblage, on account of the numerous voices on earth ; for almost all the nearer figures have their mouths wide open. Is the moment here chosen, that when the Saviour demands of his

incipient proselyte, why he persecuted him? Or is it that of immediate after occurrence, when Saul, instead of a direct reply, evades the question by asking another, namely, "Who art thou, Lord?" In either case,—so many of the companions of the apostle, all with open mouths, exclaiming at once, destroys the effect, and deviates from the scripture, which mentions no more of oral communion than a dialogue, the two colloquists being Jesus Christ and Saul; and does not imply the presence of so numerous a company as we here behold.

The mouth which the painter should have represented open, is closed: those which he should have represented closed, are open. I wonder that the Italian churchmen did not perceive this indecorum, and call upon Ercole to amend his reading, as they did upon Daniel de Volterra to accommodate with small clothes, the rising saints and sinners of Michael Angelo; for it is in the very teeth of the scripture, which expressly says, "The men which journeyed with him, stood *speechless*." Again, Jesus Christ is indeed here depicted, but with his mouth shut, although he should have been the sole speaker. He is introduced in a common-place, theatrical, sort of cloud above; but, otherwise, here is no manifestation of miracle, or aught else, below, than a display of military foppery and other trivial prettinesses of costume, effected by means of a "prodigal use of minute ornament, gold, and fine colours," to the neglect of considerations of real grandeur.

The future apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, here wears an embossed and superbly plumed helmet, fit for a pageant; and, like some of his attendants, a suit of variegated armour, that might with some pro-

priety have made its appearance in that magnificent triumphal procession of the Emperor Maximilian, which Albert Durer has immortalised. Indeed the work altogether, looks more a production of Wolgemuth (who was Durer's master) than of Italian origin.

The caparisoned white horse, from which the persecutor, who had "breathed forth threatenings and slaughter against the disciples," has been dismounted, looks not only suffering, but pleading, or imploring for mercy; for, like the human figures, he is painted with his mouth wide open: and assuredly, with as good reason as the ass of Balaam, he might inquire, "Wherefore hast thou smitten *me*?" The painter, in our humble opinion, had better have avoided this inuendo, since there is no scriptural authority for it, and have forborne to plunder Homer and the Pentateuch.

In truth, we can scarcely make out *what* point of time the artist has chosen, or has intended to choose; but it is quite clear that he has missed the critical, pregnant, and important, moment, which it was his first duty to have selected, when "suddenly there shined round about him a *light from heaven*, and he *fell to the earth*, and *heard a voice*," all of which were of *simultaneous* occurrence, and none of which are here depicted—neither the light, the voice, nor the earth-stricken offender.

But neither is the time chosen that of dawning conversion, when the proselyte inquires, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" for the Lord answered and said unto him, "*Arise*, and go into the city;" and here, though Saul is speaking, he is already upon his legs.

The horses introduced, are very indifferently drawn; and so are the human extremities: nor are the characters of their countenances much better. That of Jesus Christ is any thing but divine; neither could we have guessed *who* it was intended for, but for the clouds and the halo of glory which surrounds it. A naked figure, or naked bodied figure, is improperly introduced among the companions of Saul, which has no other effect than to show how indifferently the author of this performance could reason, and could paint a human back.

As a whole, whoever painted the present picture, we may dismiss it as the production of a laborious, solicitous, unreflecting, and servile mind, without genius, and apparently brought up to Painting as a drudgery and a business; and probably entertaining so little notion even of the nature of excellence in that liberal art, or of the nature of the miracle of St. Paul's conversion, as reluctantly to waste on this subject, the time and talent that would with more of homogeneous enjoyment have painted for Madam Watersouchy the most perfect fillet of veal that ever made the mouth of man to water.

HOLY FAMILIES.

NOTHING can more evidently show how inexhaustible are the stores of Art, when Nature, as it ought, is regarded as at once their archetype and treasury, than the numerous hosts of Holy Families which have issued from the studios of the artists of the continent, for, notwithstanding that their numbers are without

number, we find no two of them alike or bearing any very near resemblance. Glory be to human nature! Home, and the domestic charities which constitute home, bubble up around the sacred and perennial fountain whence all these are drawn. Yes; all these *divine* compositions are transcripts of the best passages of *human* nature; nor, but for the painters, and their instructive productions, might we have known that this source,—so simple in its primary elements,—was inexhaustible, and that neither Art, “nor Custom, could stale its infinite variety.”

We have half a dozen Holy Families here in the National Gallery; but a single one of which, in point of *conception of the subject*, will bear comparison with that charming Madonna and the Holy Infants, by Annibal Caracci, which, though not in our metropolitan collection, is well known from the masterly engraving, by Bartolozzi, that was published here many years ago, under the denomination of “Silence:” a work which is so far from being concocted according to a prescribed set of rules, such as have been asserted to govern (but which did not govern) the *practice* of the Caraccii, that it seems purely dictated by Nature, and original feeling—and of the most delightful kind too.

But why do we mention here what is *not* in the Gallery? Because it collaterally appertains to our subject; and because we deem the Caraccii, and particularly Annibal, to have been subjected to ungenerous treatment by more than the Cardinal Farnese. His Holy group seems as much a spontaneous emanation of Nature, or of the artist’s untrammelled fancy, as any work of art whatever that is at present within our recollection; whereas, the Holy Families

of the National Gallery, with that solitary exception which is alluded to above, are to be admired, alas! *chiefly*—not entirely—on account of their *technical* merits: not that these also do not emanate from fine and original feeling on the part of the artist. The distinction we wish to preserve here is, that Annibal Caracci, in the instance of his Madonna and Sleeping Saviour, manifests a more lofty and exquisite conception of the divine character and nature of his subject, than those masters of whom we are about to treat. Some of these productions, however, are most extraordinary works, considering the early period at which they were produced, particularly—

THE HOLY FAMILY;

OR, VISITATION OF SAINT ELIZABETH; BY

ANDREA DEL SARTO.

WHICH must have been painted somewhere about the year 1515, when Giorgione had not attained to his meridian altitude, and Titian was scarcely above the horizon.

Vasari, with too little reflection and discrimination, says of this artist, that for *perfectly understanding the principles of chiaroscuro*, for representing the indistinctness of objects in shadow, and for painting with a sweetness truly natural, he was the most faultless of the Florentine painters: Lanzi, with somewhat more truth, adds, that he was modest, elegant, and endued with sensibility, and that he impressed this character on Nature whenever he employed his pencil: but Baldinucci honestly adds (what is con-

firmed by the present work), that " he was deficient in that elevation of conception which constitutes the epic in painting as well as in poetry."

With the exception of the first, these remarks are all exemplified in the picture before us ; the technical merits of which are surprising, when we consider the early period at which it was produced ; and, notwithstanding that more than three centuries have since elapsed, it is still, in several respects, an exemplary study for an historical painter, and an interesting one to the connoisseur : to the former, because it contains some passages of inimitable beauty ; to both, because its merits and defects are so obvious, that almost the least experienced student may perceive them.

The subject is not strictly a Holy Family, though it be so termed in the Catalogues, St. Joseph being absent from the domestic group. It is simply a supposed visit from St. Elizabeth to the Madonna, during our Saviour's infancy, she being accompanied by her son, the infant Baptist, who is very properly represented as about six months older than the infant Christ.

The characters of the two mothers, as here depicted, are unworthy of their scriptural importance, more especially that of Elizabeth, who has an African complexion, with—we were about to write—Italian features ; but her sharp lips, large cheek bone, and the whole contour of her countenance, give us to understand that she is rather adopted from some production of Lucas of Leyden, or Albert Durer of Nuremberg, who had about this time attracted the attention of Europe by their paintings and engravings.

We willingly grant that there is an unpretending simplicity about this countenance, and that it is not much to be quarrelled with on the score of age; but, since St. Elizabeth was the wife of a ministering priest of the great temple at Jerusalem, she was at least entitled to an aspect somewhat more dignified. We have a cartoon of this subject at the Royal Academy, from the hand of Da Vinci, wherein the head of St. Elizabeth shows how much that great artist was of our opinion. The foot, too, of Elizabeth is a trifle too small; and, considering that she was of higher rank in Hebrew society than St. Mary, should surely have been graced with a sandal.

The head of the Madonna is better than that of Elizabeth, yet far from being elevated or divine. There would be something about it of appropriate serenity and sedateness, were not the eyes unnaturally dark in the crystalline humour. It is in fact (we believe) the portrait of Signora Lucretia Venucchi, ~~the wife of the artist,*~~ who led her husband a miserable life, and ~~perhaps insisted~~ upon the honour of sitting for his Madonnas, for they all appear with the same face, save and except that the *Madonna del Sacco* (of which there is a large engraving by Bartolozzi, and another by Morghen) is very superior to the rest. The signora was very arbitrary, and had rendered poor Andrea so completely subservient to her views, that she recalled him from the French court at a critical period of his life, and in violation of a compact he had entered into to paint for

* The appellation of *del Sarto* was merely a nick name, originating among his juvenile acquaintance, from the circumstance of his father being a *tailor*, but it gradually superseded his family name of Venucchi.

Francis I. The Madonna is distinguished by a faint circlet of golden light surrounding her head.

The infant St. John is the best, and by far the best, figure of the group. He has brought with him his labelled and symbolical cross, which lies before him on the ground, and receives its due portion of light; while his characteristic camel-skin garment is delicately hinted at, the painter having employed a certain portion of it to bring forth his figure with the better emphasis. Thus accompanied, the infant Baptist appears before us as the proclaimer of "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world!" and what is more, he really looks as if *his mind were dilating* with the dawn of his divine mission. It is as though sublimity blended itself with beauty. The young Baptist approaches the incipient Saviour with infantile curiosity, mingled with a degree of admiration and awe warming into prophetic enthusiasm, that is extremely pertinent, while it abundantly justifies the praise of Lanzi, that the mind of del Sarto was elegant, endued with sensibility, and empowered to impress this character on Nature. Here is the eloquence of art! The Gallery contains nothing finer of the kind than this bust; and we might seek long, even among the Infants of Georgione, Titian, Raphael, or any other of the contemporaries of Andrea del Sarto, before we meet with its superior. Coupled with the action of his right arm (which, by the way, is a trifle too short and small), it is as if, at the first sight of the Saviour, gales from Eden bestowed on his infantile precursor "a momentary bliss," and he was prompted by inspiration to pronounce the emphatic announcement of his divine mission, "Behold the Lamb of God!" And,

notwithstanding all that is expressed, and all that is so eloquently suggested, still the character of this fine countenance is perfectly infantile. We have somewhere read of "child-worship"—The painter has here presented us with the outward and visible sign of child-worship,—or the sentiment which immediately precedes it.

Had this silent poetry been carried onward to its proper acmé, which should have been the countenance of the Saviour himself; had the same sensibility to the sacred sound of "glad tidings" been at least *germinating there* (even at the risk of the imputation of prematurity); could we but have traced even but what the patriarch Job calls the earliest glancings of the dawn, to have shown that the day-spring of Salvation *had* visited us, the picture would have been a miracle of art, worthy of its divine subject, worthy to hold a place, not only in the National Gallery of Great Britain, but an eternal place in the pictorial recollections of the tasteful, and an illustration of our motto. But here the artist, excepting in manual execution, has fallen off, and lost himself. It would seem as if the resistless Signora had not only stipulated for herself, but had further insisted upon one of her own curly-poled bambinoes being introduced as the Saviour of mankind. There is, in short, nothing at all Deific, either in the character or action of the Divine Infant.

Doubtless he is meant to be highly delighted; but he is actually laughing aloud, which is mere temporal coarseness, and cannot be regarded as worthy of the occasion; and he points in a manner which it is difficult to understand as not intended to be jeeringly, at the old woman.

Nor do the imperfections of the picture end here. The composition cuts everywhere against a sky which is somewhat raw and gloomy, in a liney and disagreeable manner, betraying the immaturity of at least this species of artistical knowledge. But, viewed apart from this circumstance, by those who can so abstract and conduct their attention, the picture is a capital piece of colouring. The dark red vest, the blue robe, and the mantle of the Madonna, brown of a purplish hue, are of the depth and richness of Titian's loom. Ample and flowing in their forms, they constitute broad masses of obscurity, which bring forth and sustain the flesh tints of the infants with the utmost perspicuity and beauty. Elizabeth wears a white hood, and a yellow robe, which robe is cast in the grandest style of drapery forms.

But the carnation tints, and the full and round forms of the children, thus brought forth into warm breadths of light, are admirable. They can scarcely be too highly commended. Juicy, and Giorgionesque, and abounding in blandishment and variety, there seems just enough of neutral grey and brown woven into the warmer lights, to enrich them in the utmost degree that is compatible with the ostensible imitation of Nature : and though exquisitely finished, they betray not the faintest signs of vain labour, or of labour at all ; for even their crisped auburn hair, which is very carefully and dexterously pencilled, is touched with consummate taste, while it is entirely free from redundancy of manual display. Of the modest art which becomes charming by innocently hiding itself in its own merits, the painting of these Divine Infants affords a fine specimen, subject, however, to the deduction which is mentioned above.

Reading over what we have written, we perceive that we have not noticed that distant roofing of cottages seen betwixt the stems of some sapling willows, bounding the landscape on the right; a trifle this: they may easily be supposed to be the humble residence of the carpenter of Nazareth. Further, we perceive that we have not said quite enough of the unostentatious and gratifying facility with which Andrea handles his pencils. It may be noticed in many passages, but no where more particularly or successfully than in the oleaginous markings of that right hand of Elizabeth, which is placed on the side of her little sainted son, as if in the act of introducing him, with precisely that degree of maternal solicitude that appears proper to the occasion. That aged hand is drawn with an air of spontaneous felicity that is much to be enjoyed by a tasteful eye. Neither Michael Angelo, of whose style it reminds us, nor any other *Angelo*, could have done it better.

THE HOLY FAMILY VISITED BY ST. ELIZABETH
AND ST. JOHN.

LODOVICO MAZZOLINI OF FERRARA.

THIS is another of the curiosities of reviving art, and the style in which it is painted corresponds so essentially with Lanzi's description of that of Mazzolini, as to place its ascription to that artist beyond all question.

After clearing his earlier biography of certain doubts, the Abaté proceeds to state, "that he did not excel in large figures, but possessed very rare merit

in those on a smaller scale" (which of course is to be understood with reference to his contemporaries and predecessors, and not to artists of subsequent ages). The time in which Mazzolini lived, is to be gathered from the circumstance that he was a pupil of Costa, who died in the year 1530.

"Baruffaldi laments that Mazzolini's manner should continue to be nearly unknown to the dilettanti. It displays a considerable degree of finish; sometimes appearing in his smallest pictures like miniature; while not only the figures, but the landscape, the architecture, and the *bassi-relievi*, are most carefully executed. There is a spirit and clearness in his heads, to which few of his contemporaries could attain; though they are wholly taken from the life, and not remarkably select [they are not indeed]. In particular those of his old men, which in the wrinkles and the nose sometimes borders on caricature. [In the present work, the head of St. Joseph—the oldest—is the *best* in the group.] The colour is of a deep tone, not so soft as that of Ercole; with the addition of some gilding, even in the drapery, but sparingly applied.

"In the Royal Gallery at Florence, a little picture of the Virgin and Holy Child, to whom St. Anna is seen presenting fruits, with figures of two other saints, has been attributed to Ferrari; but it is the work of Mazzolini, if I do not deceive myself, after comparison made with others examined at Rome."

We can scarcely doubt that the historian is here in the right; and the observant and reflecting reader will easily trace the pedigree of the kind of merit, which we perceive in the work before us, of the Visit of St. Elizabeth, and that which Mazzolini is

here described to have possessed. It was generated by the missal painting of the middle ages, upon the beauty of the reappearing sculpture of Greece and Rome; and Mazzolini could have owed little to the instructions of Costa, unless Costa instructed him to aim at this incorporation.

The similar choice of subject helps to persuade us that Lanzi is correct in attributing the Florentine picture of the Visit of St. Anna to the Madonna and Bambino, to Mazzolini. In its spirit, it precisely resembles the work before us. The painters of those early ages, or the devotees and churchmen who gave them commissions, frequently indulged in the most extravagant reveries of anachronism, or were altogether reckless of such matters; and in their saintly visitations or assemblages, historical or fancied, they substituted, without scruple, one holy personage for another, as might most effectually gratify their patrons or their religious partialities, or fall in with the legendary fictions in which their fancies delighted. Akenside has not touched upon this pleasure of excited imagination, or has touched but in a general way, under the head of incongruities; which he deemed worthy of ridicule, while these painted incongruities were in Italy deemed worthy of reverential regard. Yet it may not be undeserving of notice, that it afforded to those who then lived, and fasted; and prayed, and were sufficiently opulent to indulge in such pleasures, the same species of gratification that poetic fiction has afforded in more liberal, or less primitive, ages.

We esteem the real subject of Mazzolini's picture, as far as scripture is concerned, to be a visit paid by St. Elizabeth and the priest Zacharias, with their

son, the infant Baptist, to the Holy Family, while residing at Nazareth, according to the Gospel of St. Luke. The Holy Infants are very frequently brought together thus by the Italian artists; and as the one was only six months older than the other, the painters derived hence the most favourable opportunities of depicting the domestic charities in more than their native loveliness, because heightened by the sanctitude of religious sentiment.

As St. John the Baptist was believed to be a second avatar of the Prophet Elias, St. Francis, who has been supposed to make his appearance in the present picture, might easily, when viewed in this glowing radiance of sacred fiction, be thought with sufficient appropriation, to represent the Hebrew priest Zacharias, notwithstanding his spare form, high cheek bones, shaven crown, monkish habit, and other external signs of poverty and ascetic humility; and such a visit as we have named above, paid to St. Joseph and the Holy Mary, when contemplated through the poetic and gratifying medium of sacred fiction, might easily be confounded, blended, or typically indented, with other facts and circumstances, including the portraits of their patron *saints*, or even of the immediate *patrons* of Grandi, Mazzolini, or any other of the monastic painters of Italy; we know that Raphael introduced Pope Julius the Second, in the character of the High Priest Onias, in his "Heliodorus driven from the Temple."

These equivokes, or serious jokes, stirred the religious fancy of Italy during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, agreeably, no doubt, or we should not find them so abounding as they do in the modern collections of the works of the old masters. It matters

little to us and our posterity, whose belief may not exactly respond to that of these former patrons of art, that the cinque-cento harp of our ancestry is suspended on the willows, and that the right hands of its musicians have forgotten their cunning. Our forefathers fixed their veneration and found their wisdom here. As in the history of Fine Art, so in the concatenated history of man, who has presumed to pronounce himself

“Midway from nothing to the Deity,”

these are indispensable links, notwithstanding that there may be among us those who, morally speaking, may deem such works as we here treat of, fit lumber for the limbo of vanity, where

———“All who on vain things
Build their fond hopes of glory, or lasting fame,
Or happiness, in this, or th’ other life ;
All who have their reward on earth ; the fruits
Of *painful* superstition and blind zeal,
—— find
Fit retribution ; empty as their deeds :
—— Eremites and friars,
Black, white, and grey, with all their trumpery,
Here pilgrims roam, that stray’d so far to seek
In Golgotha him dead, who lives in heav’n ;
And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
Or in *Franciscan* think to pass *disguis’d* :
While now Saint Peter, at heav’n’s wicket, seems
To wait them with his keys.—When lo !
A violent cross wind
Blows them transverse ten thousand leagues awry
Into the devious air : there might ye see
Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tost
And flutter’d into rags ; then reliques, beads,
Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
The sport of winds. All these upwhirl’d aloft,

Fly o'er the backside of the world, far off;
Into a limbo large and broad, since call'd
The Paradise of *Fools*."

St. Joseph, with the Madonna and infant Saviour, receive their visitors, seated in front of a sort of triumphal arch of marble, adorned with antique sculptures of battles in relievo, the lower one bearing some general resemblance to the famous marbles of Phygalia: whether the artist (as might be supposed from a circumstance to which I shall presently advert) meant any juxta-position of the sentiments of "peace and good will towards men," which was now dawning on the world under the Christian dispensation, to the pagan wars of preceding ages—whether he had in mind that these holy and humble founders of the catholic faith, established themselves and the new religion, on the ruins of former triumphs—we cannot be certain; but in either event, the circumstance coincides with what Lanzi and Baruffaldi have recorded of Lodovico's predilection for the antique relievos as *materiel* in his compositions; as also that such monuments were now reappearing, and exciting due reverence, and corresponding influence on the reviving arts.

Of the heads, that of the Madonna is fairer in complexion than the rest, but very poor, and even vulgar, in character and expression: St. Joseph is better; but Zacharias (alias St. Francis) and Elizabeth, appear in complexion like the copper-coloured race of America. All the faces have an air of portraiture; and, as the historian of the Ferrarese school has kindly added, are "*not remarkably select*," but rather remarkably otherwise, although carefully executed.

The Madonna holds forth the Holy Infant on her knee. He has nothing very divine about him, any more than herself, unless a quaint golden halo, closely fitted to his head, might be so construed. All the figures have these elaborate gilded glories, excepting the little St. John (and we know not why he should have been excepted, unless it be that his head is one of the best in the group, and therefore stands the less in need of borrowed ornament.) The little Baptist is dressed in his camel skin, and has brought with him his emblematic lamb.

The reader perhaps remembers our scepticism as to the simple and single, or the typical and literal, or double, meaning of the artist, in his contrasting the sculptured atrocities of former ages with the dove-and-lamb-like doctrines of the new advent, or which were dawning on the world in the days of Joseph and Mary. An equivoke, or ambiguity of a different description, appears detached from the holy group, and a little above the left hand lower corner of the picture. A *monkey* is here introduced, as if he had some serious or comical design on the infant Baptist, or his symbolical lamb. It has been conjectured "to have been intended as a symbol of mischief, in opposition to the innocency of the lamb;" and that "the artist probably meant by it to prefigure the malevolence, with which, at a future period, the Saviour would be assailed by the Pharisees."

But the introduction of this ambiguous monkey is ill judged, since, in whatever view we regard it, that appropriate solemnity which is inseparable from all the trains of thought connected with the sublime mysteries of Incarnation and Redemption, are inevitably marred by it. It is not so likely, I think, to be

intended as an allusion to pharisaical proceedings, as to denote that the same mischievous *devil*, who afterward stimulated the daughter of Herodias and tempted Jesus Christ, was already about their paths, watching an opportunity to put his paw upon the Baptist or the Saviour.

As Zacharias is exactly a Franciscan friar, with a shaven crown, and habited in a brownish-grey drapery such as theirs; so his wife wears the corresponding habit, or monastic stole, of a nun.

The effect of this picture is far better than that of Grandi's, which we have just passed; but this does not appear to have resulted from any preconceived plan on the part of the painter—and yet it would seem harsh to deny him this credit. The draperies being all of a sombre cast, and clustered together by seeming accident, form a dark mass as opposed to the marble sculptures; forth from which comes—still lighter in local colour—the head of the Madonna, and the figure of her Holy Infant. The head of Elizabeth, surrounded by her white veil, and with her dark red complexion, looks something like a roasted chestnut wrapped in a napkin—at least so we would write had we not some apprehension of the monkey-devil.

The air and action of the Jesus Christ, are not infantile; but seem too much as though he were lecturing Zacharias the priest, who had borne such excellent testimony to the divinity of his mission, and who is kneeling before him. As Mr. Ottley writes, this (of Zacharias) is “a good figure”—the best of the assemblage. He further writes, that the group is well composed; but in this respect, there is little to commend or to blame.

THE VISION OF SAINT AUGUSTINE.

BENVENUTO TISIO.

THIS talented artist is perhaps better known by his cognomen of Garofalo, or *Garofolo*, which he obtained from marking his pictures with a flower which bears this name in the Italian language—we believe the gilliflower, which, however, does not make its appearance in the present performance; but his proper patronymic designation is as above. He was born at Ferrara, in the year 1480, and received his rudimental education, as an artist, under Panetti, from whose school he removed to Cremona, and placed himself under the tuition of his maternal uncle, Niccolo Soriani. Lanzi, who pronounces Tisio to have been the most eminent among Ferrarese painters, says, that “on Niccolo’s death he *fled* from Cremona,” which, perhaps, may only be intended to imply, that he suddenly quitted that city, and not that he left it under any apprehension of punishment, since we find no crime imputed to him. He fled from Cremona—to Rome; thence he travelled through various Italian territories; remained two years with Costa at Mantua, and finally returned to Rome, just at the season of Raphael’s glory.

Tisio was the senior of this great artist by a single year; nevertheless, he immediately did homage to his superior genius, by becoming his disciple, and though but for a short time, it was sufficient to enable him to become the chief ornament of the Ferrarese school. He imitated Raphael in his style of design, in the characters of his heads, and in expression, with considerable success; blending with

the colour of that great master, something of superior warmth and richness, which he derived from his earlier Ferrarese practice, or from his own observation of nature, or of those local energies of his art, of which he had obtained the mastery. On these points, the Vision of St. Augustine affords ample testimony.

After a few years, Benvenuto's domestic affairs recalled him to his native city. Having arranged them, he would willingly have returned to Raphael and Rome, but the solicitations of his former preceptor, Panetti, and still more, the honourable commissions of Duke Alphonso, retained him at Ferrara, where he is believed to have died in the year 1559.

The St. Augustine, whose curious vision is here depicted, was not the bishop of that name who converted our Kentish King Ethelbert to christianity, and who has been emphatically styled "the Apostle of England," but was a bishop of Hippo, in Africa, and a father of the Christian church, who preceded him of Canterbury, about a century and a half; and, like him, was an intolerant zealot, fond of power, and of distinction as a polemic writer. Among the mysteries which he aspired to develope, and proposed to display before the Christian world, was that of the Holy Trinity! and whilst engaged in the necessary preliminary studies, he very opportunely dreamed that a little child, seated by the seaside, and holding a ladle, warned him that it would be easier for himself to transfer the contents of the ocean into a small hole which appeared in the earth before him, than for any exertion of human intellect to reach the sublime height of that most recondite of mysteries. The saintly student therefore desisted.

This was figuratively, and with a childlike simplicity, informing the Bishop, that he, who was human, and finite, could not possibly comprehend what was divine, infinite, and incomprehensible; and the artist, more thoroughly aware of this, than he supposed St. Augustine to have been, has distinguished him by a very capital polemic expression—self-sufficient, and as if he almost despised what he was compelled to submit to. This should, at least, in some measure, redeem Benvenuto from the imputation of servility, or complete subserviency to the purposes of other men, in the employment of his pencil, which has been cast upon him, perhaps mistakenly and undeservedly. It has been supposed that “the Holy Family, with angels in the sky, the figure of St. Catherine beneath, and that of St. Lawrence in the distance, were doubtless introduced *by order* of the person for whom it was painted, who wished it to contain the figures of all those saints to whom he was more especially devoted.” The reader perceives that we are sceptical as to this submission on the part of the painter to the dictations of others, and rather incline to hold by our formerly asserted opinion, that the prevalent superstitious fiction, which we had nearly termed atmospheric, that pervaded all mental movements, during the dark ages of pilgrimage and chivalry, acted the romantic part of the poetry of more enlightened times, and that the artists were so nearly as much possessed by it as their patrons and employers, as to feel no repugnance, and perhaps scarcely any consciousness, that they were violating chronology, or “the verity of historical representation.” It was as much matter of course in the painting of altar-pieces and monastic

decorations, as are the fictions of personification, the fabled existence of "the Muse," or fancied presence of "the Sacred Nine," to modern poets. It was like Dante's pressing Virgil into Christian service. It was what Pope would call the painter's "machinery," of that superstitious period. Have we not now our romances of history, as they are permitted to be called, in which as wild flights from truth are sometimes taken—for the benefit—the *benefit*?—Oh yes, for the benefit, no doubt, "of the *discerning* public."

The discerning public has, however, at length, discovered the limit of these sacred jokes, and that they may not be carried quite so far in the nineteenth, as in the fifteenth century: it has discovered that though old bizarre assemblages of this nature may continue to be tolerated (because they are old), new ones will not. An attempt at the *romance of the Old Testament* has lately failed, although the talents of our friend Martin were put in requisition for its support; and a day may come when the pure fountains of truth may no longer be polluted even by such sweet infusions as have lately palled upon our better sense.

The landscape passages of Tisio's performance, are preposterously heaped together in the style of Pelion upon Ossa; the rocky mountains being interspersed with trees, patches of cultivation, and clusters of buildings; among the latter may be distinguished a Christian church and some monastic edifices, seen across a bay of the sea. St. Laurence—if it be St. Laurence—is at a distance, standing upon a little jutting cape, but without his symbolical gridiron.

Upon a sort of rock table, or table rock, is part of

the holy student's library: his mitre also is there, evidently too large for his head—either by inadvertency or inuendo. All the principal figures are distinguished by golden haloes, excepting the infant Christ, and the little Holy Ghost, or for whomsoever else the visionary monitor may be intended, who brandishes his ladle, and restrains the spiritual ambition of the bishop: yet these have sacred radiances emanating from the top and sides of their heads, in *three* distinct divisions, with some mystical trinitarian reference, as may be conjectured, but which (after contemplating the present picture) we may not, and do not, attempt to penetrate.

The action of this important little personage is well conceived, being at once infantile, and artlessly expressive of his purpose. He, as well as the infant Saviour, who stands gracefully on the lap of his mother in the regions of beatitude, is drawn and coloured with a degree of truth and delicacy, which other, less gifted, painters, have toiled after in vain; and they are both so free from every species of pictorial affectation, as to show that Tisio had traversed Italy to good account, well knowing how to avail himself of the infantile graces of his predecessors, and more especially those of Raphael and Parmegiano.

Neither are the countenance and figure of St. Catherine, who, holding her palm of martyrdom, stands somewhat awkwardly wedged among rocks, behind the bishop, less exquisitely beautiful; yet is in due subservience to the diviner beauty of the Madonna. The holy student himself, attired in his richly coloured episcopal robes, is excellently well painted, and without the least attempt at obtrusive

display on the part of the painter. Of his character and expression of countenance, we have already spoken. By the way—we have *acquiesced* in calling this female saint, *Catherine*, not thinking it worth while to dispute the matter: we should else have inclined to call her *Cecilia*—that sainted musician of Italy; and to suppose the painter intended we should understand her as having descended from the group of celestial choristers, to impart the necessary degree of religious assurance, to humble the polemic pride of St. Augustine, and preserve harmony between the daring bishop and his powerful little monitor of the ladle. Even as it is, the former seems quite sufficiently disposed to start into controversy. But we do not see why else Cecilia should not have been among the blessed musicians in heaven; nor why either of these saints should have been sent down to earth. Further: St. Catherine is usually (almost invariably) denoted by the introduction of a portion, at least, of the wheel on which she suffered martyrdom.

The Madonna herself, who sits above the clouds regarding with serene and benignant interest the proceedings of St. Augustine, is more perfectly divine than any other personage in the picture—possesses more of that ineffable cast of countenance which we so justly admire in the best of the Madonnas of Raphael. It is indeed one of those faces of purity, which it is a solace from the cares of life to look at, and which teaches us that pictures, as Addison has said of books,

— “are fair Virtue’s advocates and friends.”

The Holy Family are of colossal dimensions, as

compared with the chorus or band of angels, who are performing for their regalement, or in the delight of angelic duty, a celestial concert. The whole of this heavenly group is supported by a volume or stratum, of clouds, so thin that it would require the cessation of gravitation, or at least a reasonable share of faith, to believe it could support them—throne, paraphernalia, canopy of green and gold, musical instruments, and all. But as the entire composition is but a dream, there is nothing to be objected to, and no more to be said. Improbability is here admissible, or to be tolerated; and, as Mr. Ottley has remarked, “it would be unreasonable to censure the painter’s disregard of laws to which he did not consider himself amenable.” In short, Benvenuto had here to paint the *Dream of a Saint*; and the dream of a saint of the *fourth* century of the Christian era, he has here ably painted.

The draperies are cast in an excellent taste; particularly those of St. Mary, and the rich crimson mantle, and delicate under-vest of St. Augustine. The blandishments of chiaroscuro, and the judicious melting together of certain parts of a picture, in order to give greater éclat to others, was at the early period, in which Tisio lived, not felt or understood—excepting, indeed, by Coreggio, whose example was not yet influential. Hence the attention of him, who critically regards the present picture, is at first too strongly attracted toward the cutting lines which terminate the masses of shadow in no very agreeable shapes, and deteriorate the effect; but this gradually goes off as he continues to gaze, and the beauties and merits of the performance, which are very considerable, steal over his mind.

In Italy, this Vision of St. Augustine was thought to be the finest cabinet picture, from the pencil of Garofalo, that was any where to be seen: and Mr. Carr thought himself happy in the opportunity of purchasing it, during the revolutionary troubles, from the Corsini Collection.

THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.

ANGIOLO BRONZINO.

THAT Bronzino was one of the *elders* in Art, the eye of the connoisseur will easily discover in the primitive style of the present portrait. He was born at Florence in the year 1511, and studied under Pontormo, whose style, precepts, and manner, he so closely followed, that their works are sometimes mistaken for those of each other. At the time of his decease, Pontormo was painting the interior of the chapel of St. Lorenzo, in his native city; and Bronzino was held in such estimation, even in his youth, that the grand duke immediately appointed him to succeed his master in the completion of that work.

Bronzino painted the portraits of many of his distinguished contemporaries, amongst whom were the Doge Andrea Doria, Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarch, and most of the illustrious house of de Medici, of whom it is more than possible that the female before us may be one: but he painted history as well as portraits, and sometimes luxuriated in the poetry of painting. One of the most celebrated of his performances, is an allegorical Venus, which is probably still at Florence, wherein he has represented the Goddess embracing Cupid, attended by mirthful

Loves ; but attended also by Fraud, Jealousy, and other concomitant evils.

Pilkington says, that " his works at Florence, Pesaro, and Pisa, bear lasting testimony to his merits ; nor was he less esteemed and respected for his amiable qualities, than for his professional talents. His taste of design was grand ; his pencil neat, but free ; his colouring resembled that of Pontormo ; and in his draperies he imitated the manner of Michael Angelo Buonaroti. He died in the year 1580."

These encomiums seem to belong to an artist of somewhat higher attainments than would seem to appertain to the painter of the present portrait : but it is perhaps an early work. One of the first expedients in painting ; one of the most artless, and obvious, and immature, rules of Art, is to relieve light from dark, and bring dark off light, with little coquetry or address ; and, as Mr. Ottley has observed of the present picture, " The green curtain, forming the back-ground, is so managed—according to the old Florentine system of effect, that the light part comes behind the dark side of the head, and *vice versa*." Yet this portrait reaches quite up to the mark of Lanzi's estimate of Bronzino's merits as a painter of portraits. " Many of his portraits (says this intelligent writer) are in Italian collections, which are praiseworthy for their truth and spirit : but their character is frequently diminished by the colour of the flesh, which sometimes partakes of a leaden hue, and at others appears of a dead white, on which the red appears like rouge. But a yellowish tint is the predominant colour in his pictures, and his greatest fault is, a want of relief." The great

faults of the present work are, that the shadows are too brown, and too dark.

The *nameless* Lady—we wish (by the way) my Lord Aberdeen, or some other senator of known taste for the Fine Arts, would bring a bill into parliament, compelling portrait painters to write their names, and the names of those whom they portray, on the backs, or *somewhere* about their pictures, for the benefit of posterity—The nameless Lady, is dressed in white, now somewhat soiled by the wear, with red sleeves, and puffed up and puckered shoulder pieces, which look as preposterous as our modern ladies' sleeves will appear to future ages. She wears a bead necklace, and her dark brown hair appears beneath a sort of close, Venetian, rolled up, turban, simple in form, but richly brodered; and her full bosom seems by no means pleasurably compressed by old fashioned stays.

There is something fine about the face of this Florentine Lady, and seeming to betoken that she belongs to the Bocaccio coterie. It has been called "pretty;" but it is too grave and sedate, we think, for the correct applicability of the epithet. It is tranquil and mild in character, and in its pictorial treatment somewhat resembles the heads from the pencil of Leonardo da Vinci, though with rather more of obscurity, and less reflex light in the shadows. In this latter quality it is sadly deficient, and its shadows are obviously too brown. The picture is from the Collection of the Duca de San Vitali of Parma, and was bequeathed to our National Gallery by the Rev. Holwell Carr.

THE DREAM OF HUMAN LIFE.

BY AN ANONYMOUS PAINTER.

AFTER THE

DESIGN OF MICHAEL ANGELO BUONAROTI.

IF the fame of any artist, beside Phidias and Raphael, be firmly established, it is that of Michael Angelo. First sounded from the great centre of Art and metropolis of the world, it has for three centuries been reverberating through the academies of Europe as the synonyme of supreme excellence in Historical Art. In England, Reynolds, Fuseli, and Lawrence, have bowed themselves down in willing and submissive homage, before the bright glories of his superlative attainments: and having adopted him for their artistical deity, they have offered sacrifice, and constituted their academical scriptures, accordingly. Who shall contravene or countervail them?

The president West, however, not inferior to any of these in historical composition, or in what respects the human form divine; not a man of whom it may be said, that with his darkness he dared affront the light of Reynolds or Fuseli, or even of the great Florentine, acknowledges, though with due reverence, that Michael Angelo is not uniformly transcendental:—He goes further; he plainly states that his figure of Jesus Christ, which was sculptured as a companion to his Moses, and ought, on the faith of a Christian, to have exceeded it in loftiness of conception,—“is mean, deficient in appropriate character, but slightly removed from an academical figure, and in no point

appropriate to the subject." And we believe that most persons who visit the Sculpture Gallery of the Colosseum in the Regent's Park, where there is a cast of this statue, will agree with Mr. West, unless their taste be unformed, or their discernment or candour, less than their deference for a great name.

For our own part, we confess that when we first saw this statue it seemed to fall so far short of the lofty mark of Michael Angelo, that we could scarcely believe it was either from his chisel, or intended for the *Salvator Mundi*. We had not then read West's comments on this figure; but felt our expectations, and our reverence for Michael Angelo, so discomfited, that we were obliged to go home and look at Schiavonetti's fine print of the cartoon of Pisa, in order to redeem in our estimation the Phidias of revived art. Pope Julius may have admired it and patronised its author, because nothing else so good of its kind had yet appeared in Modern Rome, and because it bore the adorable name of Jesus Christ; but it may not approach the presence of the best works of Banks, Chantrey, and Westmacott; and it really appears like condescension in the Grecian deities, which inhabit the same Regent's-park-Pantheon, to permit its co-presence as a work of Art. Removed to the British Museum, it would not stand a moment before the ark of the Phidian fragments.

Comparing this statue with the other productions of Michael Angelo, and more especially with his Last Judgment, it appears as if the Torso of Apollonius being no longer applicable or available, he had sought in vain for a divine abstract idea of Jesus Christ, to substitute for it; and that the Holy Father's anxiety to possess a fine statue of the

Saviour, had fairly pushed the great artist out of his element.

Of all possible figures, that of the Redeemer, or second person of the Trinity, is probably the most difficult to comprehend and represent, and consequently the most severe test of the talents of a sculptor, and this failure might well lead us to suspect that Michael Angelo had perhaps been somewhat over-rated, were it not for other works which have obtained immortal praise. Energy was his *forte*; and mankind have always shown themselves more prone to sympathise with *energy*, than with the chaster qualities of grace, loveliness, or correctness; with heroism, than with the milder virtues; with greatness, than with goodness; with what dilated the apprehensive faculty, than with what should satisfy the judgment.

To Michael Angelo, the *Torso* was the *Truth* of Nature, and all his own throwings were accordingly. With us, of the nineteenth century, it is but a miracle of art.

In all the accounts which the poets have transmitted of the heathen Elysium, there is nothing cheerful or inviting. A kind of dim grandeur and melancholy beatitude, pervades them, and they are always alluded to by their classic heroes, as if those heroes felt considerable repugnance at the idea of departing thither, and had much rather remain on earth. Do not our minds approach such works as the Last Judgment of Michael Angelo with somewhat of this fearful sentiment? There is a great deal to admire, to respect, to venerate, to dread: but what is there to love or to enjoy?

Entertaining such sentiments, and with the pub-

lished opinions of the President West concerning this performance before us, we need not hide our blushes while we confess that the Dream of Human Life also falls somewhat short of the standard of our expectations from Michael Angelo—not so much in its conception, as in its details. And yet there is a great deal about it of that austere, Dante-like, sublimity, which has been thought to characterise the style of design of this great artist.

• The Academician Cosway, with much talent, liveliness, and benevolence, was of a visionary and mystical turn of mind. He did not believe with Dr. Middleton, that miracles ceased with the demise of the apostles of Christ, but fancied that occasional miraculous manifestations, or revelations of the will of Heaven, continued down to the present times; and—possessing another version (for it was not exactly a duplicate) of this composition of “Michael Angelo’s Dream,” painted probably by some other disciple of the great Florentine—he was accustomed to say among his visitors, that Michael Angelo was inspired to paint or design it, in consequence of having been visited by such a dream or vision. Cosway would occasionally delineate his own visions: such delineations we have seen; and he fancied that Michael Angelo, when he produced the present design, arose one November morning and did the same, the picture or drawing being merely a copy or delineation of its nocturnal archetype.

Mr. Ottley differs from this belief, and more rationally states, that “this singular composition exhibits the vices of man—rapine, murder, lust, gluttony, inebriety, &c. passing in review before a contemplative figure, which we may term the genius, or

representative, of the human race ; to whom an angel from above, announces, with a trumpet, the awful sentence, that for all these things, God shall bring him to judgment."

Nevertheless, it appears to us, that this announced sentence is neither specified in the picture, nor is the specification sufficiently precise for a religious lesson, when reduced to these words. The gloss, or comment, is not more intelligible than the text. Were the divine announcement, or mandate, such as Mr. Ottley has construed it to be,—the "genius, or representative, of the human race," would not be "a contemplative figure," but a condemned soul.

The highest praise bestowed (by Pindar) on Homer, is "on account of his possessing the power to connect his imaginary creation with the realities of Nature and human passions ; without which, the fiction of the poet and the painter, will leave us stupified rather by its insolence, than impressed by its power ; it will be considered only as a superior kind of legerdemain."

Here is lofty praise set in apposition to contingent reproach. From all liability to this reproach, the sublime author of the Cartoon of Pisa, the grateful Adam, the adoring Eve, and the theocratic wonders of the Sistine chapel, must surely be regarded as exempt : and if we are underlings in comprehending this painted dream, with whom but ourselves, can be the fault ? Yet dreams, more than aught else, may claim a wide latitude of interpretation.

Perhaps the reader would approximate somewhat nearer to the true interpretation of this recondite conception of Michael Angelo, were he in the first instance to reflect—not that the Deity will unmerci-

fully punish man, because, whilst here below, he is threatened and tempted by vices, passions, and crimes; or, that the said passions and vices, are here passing in review to deter him from the commission of crime, or the indulgence of bad propensities; but—that like Dr. Young the poet, the great artist had his “Night thoughts;” that—being of a mystic and aspiring genius, intent on lofty speculations—he sometimes—like Cebes of old, indulged in *allegoric* reveries, of which the present picture is one:—a sort of *Apologue*, or painted *Fable* of HUMAN LIFE.

The couplet which (copied from his own works) is inscribed on the tomb of our poetical fabulist—

“Life is a *jest*, and all things show it:
I thought so once, and now—I know it,”

with the change of a single word, would not ill serve as an exposition—at least as an index whereby to expound, the painted mystery before us, which seems woven as if of ideas from the looms of Dante and Quarles, and intended to inform us that, after this dreamy life, or living dream, man—who here reposes on a slippery globe, surrounded by a sad variety of tempting and transitory, or visionary, hopes and fears—shall awaken to mental and lasting *reality*, at the sound of a trumpet from above; and thus far it is a sort of poetical epitome, or individual abstract example, of what shall happen to all: a night thought, which is very likely to have occurred to Michael Angelo, whilst engaged on the tremendous Last Judgment of the Chapel of Sextus.

Other poets—for Michael Angelo was poet, as well as sculptor, painter, and architect—*other* poets have treated the same train of moral ideas, with the

philosophical reflections that arise as we contemplate them, somewhat differently, though with similar results; or they have chosen a different medium whereby to impart a solemn truth, but that truth is still identical. Instead of a winged celestial messenger, awaking man from his dream of life to immortal realities, and astounding him with "words that burn" while they revivify, GRAY has turned the mystic telescope, and looked at school-boys at play; surrounding them, in like manner, with ideal personifications of those dangerous passions, which by their usurpations, fill the canvas of

"That *waking DREAM*, which *we call LIFE*."

The reader will perhaps do himself the pleasure of bestowing a little more than cursory attention on the concordance between Gray's speaking picture, and Michael Angelo's silent poem. The former invokes his readers to

See, how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate;
And black Misfortune's baleful train:
He shows them, where in ambush stand
To seize their prey, a murth'rous band:
And tells them they are *Men*.

Is the reader one of the frivolously fashionable, who read to be amused for the moment, and then to forget what he has read? Is he a "light reader?" Let me beg of him to shut the book. If not, as he looks at the picture he will continue to trace the concordance—

These shall the fury Passions tear,
The *Vultures* of the mind;
Disdainful *Anger*, pallid *Fear*,
And *Shame* that sculks behind:

Or pining *Love*, shall waste their youth,
 Or *Jealousy*, with rank'ling tooth,
 That inly gnaws the secret heart;
 And *Envy* wan; and faded *Care*;
 Grim-visag'd, comfortless, *Despair*,
 And *Sorrow's* piercing dart.

Ambition, this shall tempt to rise,
 Then whirl the wretch from high
 To bitter *Scorn* a sacrifice,
 And grinning *Infamy*;
 The stings of *Falsehood*, those shall try,
 And hard *Unkindness'* alter'd eye,
 That mocks the tear it forc'd to flow;
 And keen *Remorse*, with blood defil'd;
 And moody *Madness*, laughing wild,
 Amidst severest woe.

The masks which Michael Angelo has introduced in the square chamber beneath his emblematical figure, are classic emblems of *mystery*, and were thus employed by the artists of antiquity—the very word *mystery* being derived—if the philologists have rightly informed us—from *mistur*, a masked, or hidden, thing: and it is sufficiently obvious, that the slippery globe on which the dreamer has reposed, geographically painted over with the islands and continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, is intended for the terrestrial, or temporal, world. Old Quarles,—who has some fine emblematic thoughts upon a similarly symbolical occasion with the present—being less Pindaric than Gray, and less lofty in his analogies than Michael Angelo—does not term the passions, “the *vultures* of the mind,” but still, very pertinently paints youth as a winged cupid, with childish impatience bursting the shell of such a beauteous sphere as the great Florentine has here depicted, and finding nothing within but—a nest of *wasps*.

But Quarles we will set aside: Michael Angelo and Gray are fitter companions. The chief difference between the poet and the painter, with regard to the conveyance and efficiency of the moral lesson, is, that the mind *dwells* dreadfully upon what GRAY has depicted, while MICHAEL ANGELO's Ode—like a revelation flashing from Heaven—is to be read at a glance by those who have eyes to see, and souls to comprehend, his meaning

And yet there have been—and are—literary critics who, in their dissertations on works of art, illumine their readers with the information that the painter is master of but an instant; or, as they otherwise express it—steals but a single glance from time; forgetting, or suppressing his power—far beyond that of poetry, over *simultaneous* occurrences, where the latter art must drag her lengthening chain. But, however, let us proceed—

On the right hand side of the mask-chamber, sits, near the fore-ground, a helmed warrior, moody and discomfited; his arms hang listlessly; and his face is unseen, his head being leaned forward between his knees—intended perhaps to express military shame. Clouds, in agitated motion, separate the emblematic figures and groups from each other. Above and beyond the vanquished and moping soldier, men are battling—meant, probably, as emblems of Strife and Contention, or as representatives of “the big war” that gratifies Ambition. A little detached from this group, on the right hand side, I fear that a Son is dragging down his Parent by the beard; and on the other hand, sits Jealousy, or Envy, gnawing a heart—which is precisely the metaphor employed by Gray. Above, the sordid hands of Avarice, or Covetousness, are clutching a heavy bag of wealth.

To the left hand of the principal figure, Lust and Sorrow are sufficiently denoted; Inebriety raises a huge bottle to his lips; while Gluttony, below, turns a spit, on which a goose, not well trussed, is roasting before a beggarly fire—a conceit too puerile to be worthy of Michael Angelo.

The right hand of the awakening dreamer is accidentally rested on those northern regions of the globe from whence the gallant Ross and his adventurous confederates have recently returned. His figure is of Herculean mould, with a technically learned, anatomic air. The character of his countenance is more dry and archaic than perhaps modern taste will relish; its expression, that of a strong man awakening from a perturbed dream in stupid amazement, or not thoroughly comprehending what has just been imparted. The proportions of this figure are those of the torso of the Belvidere, sometimes called *the school of Michael Angelo*; and if we were to suppose this fine antique fragment restored, and sloped backward, even the action would bear such resemblance to it as might serve to justify the epithet.

The descending angel has been thought “well drawn and painted,” but we cannot quite agree to the assertion. Its foreshortening is surely more bold than accurate. There is scarcely any space, expressed or indicated, between the scapulæ and the region of the os sacrum. We doubt whether Michael Angelo could have seen and approved of this figure. It is too much of an angelic, or winged, nobody; and his expanded wings are ill set on, there being no muscular, tendonous, or bony, apparatus, for moving such immense locomotive machinery. Such painted exhibitions are calculated to send the critics to the scriptural authorities to learn whether angels were,

or rather *are*, possessed of wings? where we soon discover that the primitive angels of the Pentateuch, are *not*.

It is always injudicious of painters and sculptors, to let the points of junction where the wings of their angels are attached to their shoulders, be seen. Attention is here discomfited, because a disappointing truth is disclosed; and the higher an artist's pretensions to anatomical knowledge, the more his want of due reflection is betrayed, unless indeed, his genius should enable him to strike out,—as Coreggio has done, in the instance of that half-fledged Cupid, of which we purpose to treat in a future page—something at once creative and reflective. It is therefore—though without questioning that Michael Angelo made the original sketch, or design, from which the work before us was painted—we doubt whether he could have seen and approved of the figure before us, which has been quoted, we believe, and rendered more perspicuous and credible, by Flaxman and by Blake.

Speaking of the composition collectively, it is original, singular, extraordinary, and, if not inimitable, such as will not readily be imitated; and the whole work, particularly the chief figure and the globe, is liney, austere, and so defective in reflex light, that it may not be approvingly contemplated without especial reference to the early period when it was produced, and the contemporaneous state of imitative art. Michael Angelo was the Dædalus of modern Italy.

PORTRAIT OF POPE JULIUS II.

RAPHAEL SANZIO.

THE costume of this portrait, the chair in which his holiness is seated—in short, every part of the picture, conspires to show that it is, in all respects, a *matter of fact* portrait, in painting which, not the faintest shade of what is termed *idealising* a head, has obtained in the mind of the artist; and that Raphael, who must have produced it during the earlier part of his career (his later and riper years being passed under the pontificate of Leo X.), must have thought, or felt, it necessary to suppress, or suspend, the powers of his fine imagination whilst painting a *portrait*: perhaps considering that such works should be, both ostensibly and really, mere unadorned transcripts of Nature, to be attained only by attention to her exactnesses; hence the details, not only of the countenance itself, but of the cap, the beard, and other subordinate accessories, are attended to with the careful solicitude of one of her pupils.

We consider that this deferential homage paid by Raphael at the shrines of Nature and Truth, does not lessen, but strengthens, his title to be honoured as

“Unrival’d sovereign of the realms of grace;”

and only wish that the National Gallery also contained some scriptural history from the same pencil, that the British public might acknowledge this claim, and bow with due reverence before the sceptre of Raphael.

But our present duty is to attend to the present

work, which is simply the likeness, rendered with exemplary care and fidelity, of a fine square-headed old man, steady and firm in his resolves, if not upright in his intentions ; calm ; self possessed, if not sincere ; and who wished to pass for no more than just the man he was. It has the rare merit, too, of appearing as if the reverend pontiff sat meditating alone, and without the least consciousness that Raphael was painting his portrait.

Thus carefully and conscientiously manipulated, and the artist having been thus sedulous of accuracy, the picture affords a fine study for the modern craniologists ; the character of the second Julius being pretty well known, and his forehead, as here portrayed, remarkably broad, lofty, and flat. But in most other of the observations which we intended to have submitted concerning this performance, Mr. Ottley has so ably anticipated us, that we probably cannot do better than set his estimate of the merits, and his account of the peculiarities of the picture, before our readers, in his own words.

“ Although (according to this historian of art) the political conduct of Pope Julius, was not always such as became a Christian pastor, still his abilities in the cabinet, and his intrepidity in the field, have justly rendered him illustrious ; besides that, the liberal patronage he extended to Michael Angelo and *Rafaele*, will ever entitle his name to respectful remembrance of all lovers of the Fine Arts.”—By the way, Mr. Ottley must permit us to wish that he, and all other lovers of the Fine Arts who write in the English language, would spell this renowned painter’s name, as Milton, Reynolds, and Fuseli did—*Raphael*. Those scholars certainly understood pretty well the

orthography of the proper names, both of archangels and artists.

Mr. Ottley proceeds—"The veteran pontiff is represented in a sitting posture, his elbows resting on the arms of his chair. His cap and short cloak are crimson silk, edged with ermine, and his under garment is of white linen, plaited, with silken sleeves. He holds one of the arms of the chair with his left hand, whilst the right hangs easily, advancing before, and hiding part of the body. The head is admirable. It is that of a hardy old man, accustomed to combat and to conquer difficulties; and the square projecting forehead, strongly marked features, straight white beard, and eyes deeply seated in their sockets, indicate at once that keenness of penetration and firmness of purpose, which were among the leading traits of the character of Julius.

"Although this portrait is simple and dignified, it is not deficient in becoming ornament. The background is a green hanging, on which, at regular distances, are slightly indicated [so slightly as to be scarcely discernible], with a somewhat darker tint of the same colour, the cross keys of the pontifical office; and from the corners of the back of the chair, rise two shafts, surmounted by gilt ornaments, in the form of acorns, in reference to the armorial bearings of the Pope's family."

Hazlitt appears to have been much struck with this portrait, and he sparkles accordingly: he sees in it precisely what is seen by Mr. Ottley and ourselves, it is not necessary to quote him; but the moral and professional reflections on Raphael's practice, which he adds, are well worth the reader's attentive perusal; more especially if feelings of an

emulative nature inhabit his breast. Hazlitt says, "In seeing the labour, the conscientious and modest pains, which this great painter bestowed upon his smallest works, we cannot help being struck with the number and magnitude of those he left behind him. When we have a single portrait placed before us, that might seem to have taken half a year to complete it [an over-estimate certainly], we wonder how the same painter could find time to execute his cartoons, the compartments of the Vatican, and a thousand other matchless works. The same account serves for both. The more we do, the more we can do. Our leisure (though it may seem a paradox) is in proportion to our industry. The same habit of intense application, which led our artist to bestow as much pains and attention on the study of a single head, as if his whole reputation had depended on it, enabled him to set about the greatest works with alacrity, and to finish them with ease."

These illustrations leave us little to add: after painting the present head—which was, perhaps, a preparatory study for what followed—the divine artist availed himself of a favourable opportunity of pleasing this powerful and munificent patron, by introducing his portrait, in the character of the Hebrew high-priest Onias, in that far famed picture of Heliodorus driven from the Temple of Jerusalem, which graces the second chamber of the Vatican.

As the National Gallery contains none of Raphael's works, save the single portrait of Pope Julius, a slight biographical sketch, or contour, of the great artist, may not prove unacceptable—at least to our less informed readers.

RAPHAEL SANZIO was born at Urbino. His father,

Giovanni, was an indifferent painter. He studied first under Bartolomeo Corradini, and subsequently under Pietro Perugino—something of the dryness and exactitude of whose manner he retained, and occasionally discovered—particularly in the landscape passages of his works—until some years after he had painted the portrait which is here our proper subject. But he struck out *his own* transcendental style, of grandeur combined with grace and simplicity, after journeying to Florence, and contemplating the performances of Michael Angelo and Da Vinci.

He subsequently proceeded to Rome, and produced the twelve Cartoons (of which we have seven at Hampton Court), the immortal Transfiguration, the graphic splendours of the Vatican, and various other extraordinary works, which have remained the wonder and example of succeeding ages of art. He was befriended by the tasteful and powerful family of de Medicis, by Cardinal Bembo, Count Castiglione, Ariosto, and other of the most auspicious and splendid stars which then irradiated Italy. He was patronised by popes, princes, and cardinals; while he was almost adored by the public; and in all probability would himself have been raised (or lowered) to the honours of a cardinal's hat and a cardinal's revenue, but that he

“ Fell from the zenith of his proud career,
Full in his fame, and sparkling in his sphere.”

He died on *Good Friday*, in the year 1483, which having been also the day of his nativity, he had exactly attained the age of *thirty-seven*.

CHARITY;
OR, THE MADONNA AND HOLY INFANTS.
JULIO ROMANO.

IN our remarks on Leonardo da Vinci's Christ, we have adventured an opinion favourable to the principle that Fine Art may be regarded as selection from nature, combined with adequate power of imitation. The painter who submits his practice to a settled theory, and who aims at the poetry of his art, will consider, and so will the connoisseur of taste, how far that doctrine is compatible with another principle laid down by Du Fresnoy, corroborated by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and which seems to have existed in the mind of Julio Romano.

On such matters we can here touch but incidentally; for, although they are more important than individual pictures, individual pictures are *our proper subject*; we should not else much regard the occasional clashings, or our want, of *ex cathedra* authority, having observed that even such authority, although it greatly facilitates the dissemination of truth, falls short of its aims and fails of its object, when not sustained by the throwings of the public.

Sir Joshua and Du Fresnoy, agree that Julio Romano possessed the true poetical genius of painting in a higher degree than any other painter whatever. The latter says, or sings, that

— At Julio's birth the Muses smiled,
And in their *mystic caverns* nursed the child;
His pencil with poetic fervour glow'd:
When faintly verse Apollo's charms convey'd,
He op'd the shrine, and all the god display'd.

Yet is there about his productions a certain discourteous dryness, an utter absence of those blandishments upon which Baroccio and others have founded their hopes of fame: an archaic physiognomy, which has sometimes been termed "asperity"—contemplating which, and in comparison with which, Reynolds observes, that "exactness of imitation of natural objects (or what he somewhat sophistically terms deceptive painting) soon satiates; and that the same mental *entertainment* is required from painting as from poetry. The mind and imagination are to be satisfied, and require to be amused and delighted, as well as the eye; and when the art proceeded [arose] to a still higher degree of excellence, it was then found that deception not only did not assist, but even in a certain degree counteracted the flights of Imagination. Hence proceeded the Roman school, [or qu. the estimation in which it was held?]. And it is from hence that Michael Angelo, Raphael, and Julio Romano, stand in that pre-eminence of rank in which Du Fresnoy has justly placed them."

Sir Joshua seems here to allude not only to the above-cited verses, but to what Du Fresnoy has elsewhere written of Julio Romano; namely, that "he was the most excellent of all Raphael's disciples; he had conceptions that were more extraordinary, more profound, and more elevated, than even his master himself. His gusto was pure and exquisite; he was a great imitator of the ancients, giving a clear testimony in all his productions, that he was desirous to restore to practice the forms which were ancient. He was wonderful in his choice of attitudes;—but his manner was drier and harder than any of Raphael's school. He was well versed in polite learning."

Is it owing to the extraordinary and profound talent of this learned Roman artist, that in the instance of the small specimen from his pencil which Mr. Carr has repositied in our National Gallery, he has expressed himself so as to be variously understood by his critics and commentators?—But stop! Have we cleared up the real or seeming contrariety of taste, upon which we were intent? Have we admitted or denied—have we proved or disproved, that faithful imitation is to be preferred, and that archaisms are ineligible in the treatment of poetic subjects where the spectator's imagination is to be addressed? No. Because the metaphysics of this part of our inquiry lie far beneath the surface; because the imaginations of men being infinitely various, how shall we strike a mean average, so as to found thereon a theory, or even an argument? Strong minded men, versed in antiquarian lore—men of vigorous fancies, and who possess profound powers of abstraction—such men as Julio himself—will always be more attached to the archaic mode of painting, or the art as it was exercised by the champions of the Roman school; while imaginations of great native susceptibility, but with little cultivation or exercise, and without erudite stores, possessing a different taste, would be but embarrassed or obstructed, by what gratified those of the former description, and would prefer to see a poetical subject treated and finished as by Julio Clovio, or Coreggio. There is reciprocity between taste and its objects. All men do not love things because they are beautiful; but to some, things are beautiful because they love them. The adage, that “men differ in their tastes,” is well founded, and is a blessing in

the wide scope of enjoyment, and in the countless varieties of pleasure, which it opens to us. Theorize as we may, we must return to it at last, though we should paint an inch thick. Let us thank Heaven, then, that in the world of admiration, there is room enough both for the Coreggios and Julio Romanos.

Again, Reynolds has said that the same mental *entertainment* was required from painting as from poetry. But is this going to the root of the matter? Are not both arts existing for our *improvement* as well as delight? And would not this more enlarged view of the case make a considerable difference with regard to the philosophy of the question at issue?

There is a certain abstract or imaginative view of nature, when divested of colour, upon which sculpture grounds its poetic claims; but no critic ever fancied that sculpture excited the imagination or affected the spectator's mind more powerfully for not being carefully finished: yet this helps us not far toward settling the question; for beside elaborateness, there is to be taken into the account, as probably of more importance, a certain artless simplicity of contour, anterior to all conventionalities and received modes of elegance, of which, without examples before us, it is difficult to treat. But there are two antique figures in Mr. Westmacott's studio, of very old Greek or Phenician workmanship, that have a learned and recondite air, analogous to the austerities of the Roman style of design, a sight of which might greatly assist the analogical tracings of the tyro whose taste is forming.

These points, some of them rather occult, are all involved in taking an analytical view of the peculiarities of Julio Romano's style of painting: and so

is the hitherto untouched question of, whether it be the office of painting, as of poetry and music, to excite the mind to *emotion*? That is to say, not merely to present to it the ideas which the artist has embodied, but *so* to present them as to *lead it onward to other and original trains*, or to *awaken* ideas of previous acquirement? Or (to shape the question otherwise,) is the gratification we derive from poetical painting of a *stimulating*, or simply of a *soothing* character? And here, perhaps, we approach the central point of our discussion, or point upon which turns the critical philosophy of imitative art. Here then for the present we will let the question rest, not without perceiving that we are brought round again to the recognition of our former postulate, that different minds are variously affected by the same productions of Art; and individual taste always settles what remains of the question at issue, to its own liking. We must now revert to Julio Romano's curious little picture.

Is it owing to the Muses having nursed our highly gifted painter "in their mystic cavern"—are we to attribute it to his profound and extraordinary talents and attainments, that in the present instance he has expressed himself so as to be variously understood by his critics and commentators? Is this little picture an illustrative example of what we have stated above—namely, that it is in the nature of things that different minds should be variously affected by the same performance? Has Julio expressed himself equivocally? Or do his commentators lack discernment? Or how is it that while the Rev. Mr. Carr supposed he possessed an allegorical group of "*Cha-*

city," Mr. Ottley deems this a misnomer, and thinks that "the painter intended it to represent *Latona with her two children* at the fountain?"

The latter gentleman appears not to have recollected that those children of Latona and Jove, were *twins*, (no other than Diana and Apollo;) and that the incident of the rustic, or rather barbarian, refusal, that the goddess met with at the fountain, required the co-presence in the picture of certain Carian peasantry of the lowest grade, of whom we see no signs; nor any of the frogs to which they were metamorphosed.

But neither do we think *Charity* was intended by the painter. No: we cannot adopt either of these constructions. The allegoric Charity, as a subject for art, was certainly engrafted on the maternal character: so far is granted; but, in the overflowing abundance of the Christian virtue, and in the means of expressing this overflowing abundance—its disregard of self; its endurance of all things; and its benevolent and wide-spreading hope, has by no artist, and in no instance, that we recollect, been restricted to *two* infant participators: generally three, or four, partake of the maternal abundance of human kindness. The virtue itself is *denoted* by its blessed exuberance.

Now, though it be more than possible that we too may prove mistaken, we shall request the reader to consider, whether Julio may not rather have intended the Italian public should recognise in this picture the subject so fashionable in the age of which he was so great an ornament—that of a *Madonna and Bambino, attended by the infant Baptist*? True it

is that the latter is without his customary cross of reed, and its label; but may not Romano have thought that this little emblematic cross was become, or becoming, too conventional and common-place, and have supposed it would be better to introduce as an accompaniment a falling rivulet, which might either pass for a tributary streamlet of the Jordan, or be understood as denoting that emblematic fountain of living waters of which the scriptures tell us, and which then burst forth from the rock of salvation. Let us, however, endeavour to get at, and pay due regard to, the ideas which have governed the composition in the abstract.

The group consists of a matron of dignified aspect and character, accompanied by two children, seated among rocks and verdure, with a cascattella gushing, or a rivulet falling, at a short distance beside them, and beyond, is an extensive tract of wild scenery, terminated by a huge distant mountain of romantic form.

The two children are obviously NOT *twins*, one being at the breast, and in the early stage of infancy, and the other a robust little fellow of ruddy complexion, who can evidently walk alone, and who is supporting himself on his right leg, while the left is advanced forward (his foot resting on a jut of the projecting rock,) as if in the act of presenting something—the picture is too small, and hangs too high for us to perceive what—to the younger infant. His left hand, which hangs down in seeming diffidence, also grasps something unusual, as if it yet remained to be offered to the *bambino*.

Now then, if this reflective artist, who is recorded to have been learned and recondite, had said, or proposed to himself—I will treat the subject of the Holy

Infants and Madonna, in an original manner: I will not follow in the common track: I will avoid superficialities: I will dispense with the usual accessories of reed cross, label, lamb, and haloes of light, and I will seek for recognition, and hope for appreciation, in less extrinsic accompaniments. Would not the result have been some such as we here perceive?

I by no means insist upon the reader's thinking as I do, upon this (or upon any other) subject. I can only say that I find myself more poetically, and agreeably, and religiously, and convincingly, affected, when I fancy myself, (as this picture induces me to fancy) looking along the vale of Jordan to Mount Lebanon; and when I see—or imagine I see—a dignified Madonna seated with her divine infant, on a verdant bank and near a gushing streamlet; and when I see the little St. John advancing with his hand full of wild honeycomb (or what I construe to be intended for such), and the holy parent placing her arm encouragingly around the waist of the modest little saint, as she introduces him to the incipient Saviour—than I am by all the conventional circlets of gold, and labelled reed crosses, which all the painters of Italy have employed for the conversion of sinners, the conviction of picture gazers, and the confirmation of saints. It appears to me that there is bold reliance, in this act of dispensing with ordinary symbols; and I am on that account, and on account of the more simple and efficient indications that are substituted for these conventionalities, willing to recognise more genius, and ready to award more praise—still wishing the critical reader to exercise his own judgment.

The group is beautifully composed, evidently after

the scholastic idea of the pictorial *pyramid*, had been struck out by Michael Angelo ; imparted to his pupils, and adopted by Julio Romano. It is moreover *so* composed as to form nearly a central pyramid of *light*, relieving from dark and shaggy rocks ; broken only by the picturesque accidents of certain drapery-folds, and occupying nearly all the middle portion of the panel on which it is painted. Of this luminous pyramid, the head of the Madonna forms—and worthily forms—the apex. Although but of miniature dimensions, it has a fine Grecian contour (showing with what advantage to revived art the antique sculpture was now beginning to reappear), and a more intellectual character than painting had hitherto placed on female shoulders, with the exception of the best of Raphael's, or than is yet in our National Gallery : beside being attired in a novel and tasteful manner. She is habited in a robe and vest of blue and light brownish purple ; while the two infants are nearly in a state of nudity. The rocky back-ground is of a negative brown, and dingy green : and the colouring of the whole—to speak of the work collectively—is of a grave and subdued tone.

There is a certain degree of abruptness in the meeting of Julio's lights and shadows, which has been called “ asperity ;” which, though well suited to the finishing of Raphael's Battle of Constantine, and other such subjects, is not so properly adapted to the mildness of the domestic charities ; and there is perhaps rather too much of this dry and austere quality in the present performance. The judicious painter, like the accomplished poet, adapts his mode of treatment, to the nature of the subject treated ; and teaches his pencil to distinguish between the soft blandish-

ments of love and beauty, and "the rough edge of battle,"

As,—when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough, verse, should—*like* the billows—roar,
Not so when swift Camilla, &c. &c.

But we shall next introduce Coreggio to the reader's notice, who will throw much more grateful and effectual light upon these points, than any language which we can employ.

This little work from the pencil of Julio Romano, came to the National Gallery with the rest of the Carr collection; and formerly adorned the Villa Aldobrandini. An engraving from it by Julio Bonasoni, in a congenial style of dry austerity, may be found in the portfolios of those who collect the early productions of the Italian schools.

THE HOLY FAMILY.

ANTONIO DA COREGGIO.

OF the Holy Families treasured in our National Gallery, that from the pencil of Coreggio is the finest; and perhaps it would have been esteemed still finer as a work of Art, had it not been entitled a Holy Family, since there is nothing of the external pretension or show of divinity about it, save and except its superlative merits as a picture, and that single and quite subordinate circumstance which we shall proceed to mention.

As a young, innocent, and smiling nurse, attentive to her charge; or a delighted mother attiring her

infant son, it is of transcendental excellence: but since there is a carpenter at work in the back-ground, its pretensions to be esteemed the Holy Family must be regarded as indisputable, and we shall presently treat of it accordingly. It has already been treated of by Raphael Mengs in his account of the paintings in the royal collection at Madrid, of which it was formerly esteemed to be one of the chief ornaments. His opinions we have not had the pleasure of perusing, but in all probability the reader who wishes to form a critical estimate of the merits of Coreggio's Holy Family, will find the remarks of such an artist as Mengs, ~~well worthy~~ of being consulted.

After being acquainted ~~with~~ this work only through the medium of engravings, we were both surprised and delighted at the sight of the original, not that the engravings were not good; but that there is so much of the celestial purity of *painting* (technically speaking), and so much of that kind of peculiarity withal, which can no more be translated or rendered into another language of art—or at least which has not yet been thus rendered—than *words* can express it—So much is there of these extraordinary qualities, that it came upon us like a heavenly vision, or a picture from another planet. The Athenians of old, possessed a statue of their tutelary deity which was fabled to have fallen from heaven, and was much venerated. It had a primitive air, yet was crude, archaic, and graceless. Could they have shown such a work of Art as this of Coreggio, their fable had been rendered credible, and their veneration been justified upon internal evidence. Yet these high claims reside not in any thing celestial, superlative, or ineffable, in the *character* either of the

Madonna, or infant Saviour; and if, in what shall follow, these terms, or any of them, shall fall from our pen, they must be understood as being intended to be applied to *the peculiar felicity with which the painter has employed the instruments of his art*—not to indicate the unspeakable beauty of the characters he has produced—but we must develope and explain.

The Madonna has come forth into the genial summer air of Nazareth, as if to sit with her celestial charge, and inhale the freshness of its breezes: her little basket of nursery implements is beside her; and at a short distance, in the back-ground, Joseph the Carpenter is sedately at work, which (as is observed above) is the chief signal of a Holy Family being here intended by the artist. Intent upon his occupation among unfinished edifices, and quite detached from the fore-ground objects, he seems introduced as a denoting sign, and no more; and the Madonna and Bambino to be the things signified: as if Coreggio had preferred this to the having recourse to such conventional circlets of sanctitude as, in the works of his predecessors and contemporaries betokened holiness; and had resolved, by the potency of his art, and without factitious aid, to raise what was earthly into heavenly importance, as Adam is recorded to have been created out of clay.

And this is what he has accomplished. Of the infant Christ, the purity of its innocence alone, seems to elevate it almost sufficiently toward divinity. There is no dawn of the incipient consciousness of his sublime destiny. We speak here of what is expressed in his countenance and action. In character it has somewhat the air or peculiarity of being the portrait of a handsome and fair-haired English child: his

complexion too is exquisitely fair. The placidly smiling maternal tenderness of the young Madonna as she enrobes her infant, is also beautifully expressed. An excellent critic thinks we may observe in this female a certain innocent girlish pride arising from the consciousness of the perfections of the infant entrusted to her; which perhaps no painter except Coreggio, ever conceived. But this girlish pride is scarcely compatible with the lofty dignity which the religion of Italy attached to the character of the mother of our Saviour; nor could it probably have co-existed with that due consciousness of the perfections of the Holy Infant, which in some of Raphael's Madonnas is so profound as to absorb all other sentiments.

To our view, the group appears to beam with *domestic affection*, but it does not go beyond *select nature*. Although the Fine Art with which it is rendered be quite marvellous, there is nothing about it of the *ideal* or *deific* being intended to be superinduced on the *terrestrial*, otherwise than by the beauty of the internal blandishments of Art.

In these respects, Julio Romano's holy group (which we dismissed a few pages back) and the present, are wide as the Poles apart; and may therefore serve to teach us how various and vast are the scope of excellence and the pleasures to be derived from pictures. Both artists are justly admired, although the one be deficient in every requisite in which the other shines and abounds.

Wide as the Poles apart although Julio Romano and Coreggio were, upon an important professional principle; there is pleasure in perceiving that the sphere of their Art revolved in an orbit of urbanity;

and that if the envy and professional jealousies of some painters, have been held up to public ridicule and dislike, others are liberal—preeminent amongst whom was Julio Romano. Yes: amid the professional envy and uncharitableness, which literary commentators have been perhaps a little too prone to select and report, it is but fair to mention that Julio candidly and liberally affirmed Coreggio's colouring to be "altogether the best he had ever seen; nor was he averse to the Duke of Mantua giving the preference to Coreggio above himself, *when about to make a presentation of pictures to the Emperor Charles V.*" [Roscoe's Lanzi.]

Let the reader call to mind here, how tempting and how flattering to an artist's ambition was this occasion. And when we reflect too that decision of style in Art, proceeds from vigour and peculiarity of thought—such liberality as is here implied,* is worthy of being placed upon record, as equally honourable to Julio Romano and to Coreggio.

To return to Coreggio's Holy Family. There is nothing at all about this group, of its author having intended in the delineation of his component *forms*, to superinduce the *ideal* or *deific*, on the *terrestrial*; or (in other words) of superseding "Nature as it is," by "Nature as it ought to be"—otherwise than by

* But in truth, the instances of such liberal emulation and appreciation—at least among modern painters—are much more numerous than the world has given them credit for. He who goes much into their society, cannot have failed to witness instances of respectful deference for, and as high and just appreciation of, each other's talents, as you will find among any numerous body of fellow practitioners of the same profession (even the clergy themselves). To be sure they also occasionally blame heartily: but the same sincerity gives birth to both.

the beautiful blandishments of light, shade, and colour. There is not the least indication that such a thought had at this period of his life, entered into the mind of Coreggio.

The child is accordingly in playful action, as if something at a little distance and out of the picture—a passing butterfly perhaps—had caught its attention, and occasioned some small temporary impediment as the benevolent mother puts on his outer dress of light purple;—a sort of thing that happens to almost every mother, almost every day. Her hands, and those of the child, are most delightfully drawn and painted, and perhaps are all the better for the artist's avoidance of that factitious gracefulness of lengthening out the extremities far beyond Nature's average, in which Parmegiano about this time, or soon afterward, began to indulge.

The draperies throughout, are cast in a masterly style; broad and but little divided over the larger forms; more divided and subdivided where it is of finer texture, but everywhere characterized by a certain squareness* which is in agreeable apposition to the roundness of the limbs and other nudities.

The robe of the Madonna is red, but the artist has contrived that enough of white shall approach the carnations both of the mother and child, to show to the greatest advantage those flesh tints, which of

* Since writing the above I have learned from Lanzi that Mengs is lavish in his critical praises on the *design* of the draperies of Coreggio, "on whose masses he bestowed more attention than on the particular folds; he being *the first* who succeeded in making drapery a part of the composition, as well by force of *contrast* as by its direction; thus opening a new path which might render it conspicuous in large works."

themselves would be exquisite and admirable! In the works of no other master do we find the cool pearly greys worked into the warmer hues with such magical and exemplary skill. It is really a thing to stand before with wonder and amazement! The infant limbs are beautifully moulded: the head is immaculate! and all are rounded and blended into the most perfect harmony. The effect seems to have resulted from the dexterous and exemplary management of light, shade, and colour:—lines are scarcely recognised; and there is little of distinct specification. The right knee and leg of the Saviour come forward, and on the light side these are pronounced with distinctness against the red robe of the Madonna—and so of his face: but everywhere else, his figure is all melting and mellifluous blandishment, like the concords of sweet sounds. It far transcends all painting of the kind that had preceded it; and through the three centuries that have since elapsed, panting Art has “toil’d after it in vain.”

The whole performance seems to owe its divinity, —in great part at least—to the absence of all *effort* to make it appear divine. It is as if the author felt quite certain that there was no other art addressible to mortals, of attaining celestial perfection, but through terrestrial and intrinsic means. It sets the sophistry of art at an immense distance, and reduces to nothingness those meretricious and fantastic tricks that are sometimes played before the high heaven of painting, “which make the angels weep.”

To be able duly to appreciate and enjoy such works as this divine mother and child, is no trivial attainment of taste, and the less experienced reader, will not regret, if he sympathetically catch—a por-

tion at least, of this pleasure and this power from Annibal Carracci, who writes of the finer qualities of Coreggio, "This kind of delicacy and purity, which is rather truth itself than verisimilitude, pleases me greatly. It is neither artificial nor forced, but quite natural." And in another place, treating of the youthful and infantile heads of Coreggio, the same distinguished painter writes (what is very pertinent to the present performance), "The faces beam with so much nature and simplicity, as to enchant, and to compel us, as it were, to smile as they smile." This is charming! The ascribing to Coreggio of this power of exciting involuntary sympathy by his productions, is an exquisite compliment, proceeding, as it does, from an artist of Annibal's high attainments: yet, who feels not something of this, as he gazes at the present Madonna and infant, or, in the words of Milton,

—"Hangs over it enamoured?"

That the Emperor Charles V. received the little picture which is the subject of our present essay, as a present from the Duke of Mantua; and that it is the very work (or one of the works) alluded to by the historian of Italian art, and by Julio Romano, (in the passage which we have quoted above), is by no means improbable, since it was imported into England within these few years, *from the Spanish metropolis*, and we believe from the Escorial, by Mr. Wallis (an English artist, since deceased), who either gave or received for it two thousand guineas.

THE VISION OF ST. JEROME.

PARMEGIANO.

MICHAEL ANGELO was born A. D. 1474, Raphael in the year 1483, Coreggio in 1494, and Parmegiano in 1504. These thirty years, during which Nature—in Italy* at least—appears to have “wantonèd as in her prime,” and brought forth nothing but genius—These thirty years, were thus divided into four nearly equal portions, or periods. And the four distinguished painters who are named above, were the prime fountains of the grandeur and grace of revived art, as it first bubbled up from among the ruins of the classical ages on the banks of the Tiber and of the beautiful Arno.

Grace, have I written? I shall hope to stand excused among those who attach an exclusively religious sense to that word, even should my pen happen thus to slip again, and will endeavour to write *gracefulness* in future, where I may have occasion for the same compound abstract term: but I have been somewhat inadvertently led into the equivoke, by having recently read in Lanzi's history, that it is on account of his extraordinary *grace*, that the imperfections of Parmegiano have been pardoned; and that even his defects appear meritorious upon the same account.

By the time Parmegiano was commissioned to paint the Vision of St. Jerome, which was some-

* Dr. Robertson asserts that it was the same elsewhere in Europe.

where about the year 1526, when he could not have been more than twenty-three years of age, it is evident that most painters in their professional practice, had sprung away from that portraiture of individual objects which had regulated the aims of their predecessors, and had not merely begun to idealize, but, at Rome, had proceeded pretty far in the science of classifying and generalising their elementary notions of Art. They had evidently analysed, as they felt or believed, sufficiently for them to venture upon a reversal of the process, and were now practically adopting the synthetic mode. They had even made some considerable progress in the ascertainment of technic principle. Whether they had in all respects philosophized justly? or whether the change was operated rather by experience than *a priori* reasoning? might be made another, and a very interesting, academical question. But it was a process of *abstraction*—the metaphysics of imitative Art.

After they had classed a number of pictures together, they appear to have sought in every individual picture of that given class, for some pervading principle, or principles, which they believed might appertain, or be common, to that class. They sought it in the arrangement or combination of *forms*, of *colours*, and of *light and shade*, into which pictures had previously been analysed. In the first of these—namely, the elements of fine forms—Michael Angelo, who had a mathematical mind, believed that he had discovered the essential principles, in an *union of the PYRAMIDAL with the SERPENTINE*.

Parmegiano, among others who adopted this faith, followed and refined upon it, by infusing more of the

real or supposed element of gracefulness, than he abated of energy. His biographers admit that "his excessive study of what was graceful, led him sometimes to select proportions that were somewhat too long; no less in respect to the stature, than the fingers and necks of his figures, as in his celebrated Madonna at the Pitti palace. His colouring also aims at gracefulness, and for the most part is preserved moderate, discreet, and well tempered." Thus far Lanzi; and these observations are all exemplified in the Vision of St. Jerome.

To proceed in our elucidation.—Having ascertained that he was

"Ne'er so sure our passion to create,
As when he touch'd the brink of all we hate—"

Parmegiano now and then permitted his pencil to overslip that brink; of which the hated substitution of (slight degrees of) affectation for gracefulness, was the inevitable result. Upon this error of genius, however, we will not dwell. Enough that we have slightly alluded to it.

Refining upon Michael Angelo's abstract principles, he carried them to an unprecedented excess, seeming to have argued with himself, that if gracefulness and grandeur actually resided in a combination of serpentine with pyramidal forms, the more intensely he combined them, the more he should obtain or produce of grandeur and gracefulness; and notwithstanding that nearly three centuries have since elapsed, and that critics and amateurs who ranked high for their taste and theoretic knowledge, have controverted these principles and denounced all

endeavours to attain these important ends through means of such abstract* technical observances,—yet by some painters whom we cannot but esteem profound in the philosophy of their art,—among them is our distinguished countryman, Hogarth,—the principle of Michael Angelo has been acknowledged, strenuously advocated, and acted upon.

The reader who pleases may proceed further in the discussion of this matter; excellent illustrations, both *pro* and *con*, are before him in the National Gallery; but we cannot much further assist him. The pyramidal and spiral forms are probably only concomitant and contingent; and the propriety of adopting and employing them, as potent principles, or as exclusive signs, seems as equivocal as the search in the human brain after the precise seat of the human intellect, among physiologists.

Great danger would ensue to the science of Imitative Art, should critics mistake the concomitant of a single species of pictorial beauty, for the common, generic cause, or spirit, of all beauty. From such danger philosophy has never been free: and it may well be suspected (at least) that abstract lines, which cannot of themselves, or by themselves, produce beautiful effects, such as excite mental emotion—are not *causes*, but are only incidental, concomitant, and contingent.

It will probably finally appear that they are outward and visible signs only, of the inward, invisible, and spiritual *grace*; but that they are not the only,

* Mr. Payne Knight says, “As to *lines*, I know of none that may not be graceful, elegant, and beautiful in proper circumstances and situations; and none that are not the reverse, when employed improperly.” *Anal. Inq.* p. 210.

or exclusive, signs of grandeur and gracefulness in Art; or that of Painting must ere now have degenerated, and have been content to be ranked among the mechanic Arts, and its professors among those who toil at the lower employments of life, driven by the fear of evil, rather than attracted by the prospect of good,—a thing of which there is always danger in a commercial country, which leaves those higher ranks of society on which she professes to bestow, and ostensibly does bestow—superior education,—to pick up their knowledge of the science which presides over Fine Art, as they may.

But perhaps it ~~may~~ be better that both the seat of the ~~soul~~, and the essential principles of grandeur and gracefulness in Art, should remain occult and undeclared. Better that the subtle essence should be expansive and even evanescent, than frigid and fixed. Better that this tree of knowledge should only be *seen*, lest we lose the delightful effects we at present experience from the supernal light which gleams through the Paradise of Taste; or the occasional mighty thunderings that resound there; or the sublime flashings of genius.

However these matters may be determined, Parmegiano, if he did not invent, eagerly adopted, the principle of combining serpentine or spiral, with pyramidal, forms, and followed it up with a degree of temerity: yet with a very considerable degree of attendant admiration, of which his "*Vision of St. Jerome*" affords no inapt illustration. It carries the matter, in my humble opinion, to such an excess as to lay bare the nerve in the process of research and exemplification, and thus to teach Taste the important lesson which I have intimated above, that

the sacred principle should remain latent and behind the peplum, and that when it becomes palpable as well as obvious, it is lost. It *may* be, as certain professors would have persuaded us, the life and soul of Art; but we are not permitted to touch it—not, even with our *partizans*. And though we would never say to sacred Art, “Thus far shalt thou go, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed;” yet, on the other hand, since vital danger threatens, we would not expose either Art or Criticism to the reproach of the Poet who sings,

“ Our meddling intellect
Mistakes the genuine forms of things;
We murder to dissect.”

Not to dwell further upon the theory of this matter, the spectator sees at once that Parmegiano has carried the *serpentine* or *spiral* form, to a delightful, or dangerous, excess, in his figure of St. John; that the arms, legs, and body of this figure, are all made to contribute to a certain technical twist; and ~~that~~ he points upward to the Madonna and ~~Infant~~ Christ, who form a *pyramid* immersed in *glory*, of which the Holy Mary's head constitutes the *apex*, and throughout the details of which, Hogarth's more delicate and S-like “*line of beauty and grace*,” is prevalent.

The radiance appears, as it ought, to proceed *from* the holy personages, or from an unseen and unknown source beyond them. This is grand; and effective, without being obtrusive; and it would be still more so, if the shadowed side of the figure of the Madonna were more melted into the radiance. However, its golden hue is so far from glittering, that it seems to confer value on the carnations of Jesus Christ and

the Virgin Mary, which come forth from it with great delicacy and beauty. The robe of the Madonna is of crimson; her lower dress of dark blue, melting into profound obscurity, from the contrast of which, the golden glory above, derives that subdued brightness which charms the eye of Taste.

The countenance of the infant Saviour is placidly smiling and beautiful; but possesses not the pure ineffability which we so much admire in the finest of Raphael's. It is perhaps rather effeminate. That of the Madonna has more of divine majesty, and is much to be admired. It is matronly; lofty; sedately triumphant. Of both, the complexional carnation tints—which are delicately discriminated from each other—are in excellent apposition to the robustness of the Baptist, the wild man of the desert; and that of the hardy sleeping hermit. The fur dress of the former, is rather a leopard-skin, than that of the camel; but criticism should not be fastidious here. It is quite admissible, and even a commendable substitution in this place; because, more picturesque than a camel-skin would have been, and in more technical unison with the rest of the composition.

Parmegiano probably did not feel free enough from educational trammels, to dispense, like Titian and Coreggio and Julio Romano, with the conventional haloes by which saints were in that age denoted: so that, suspended in the glory, above the head of the Virgin Mary, this outward and visible sign looks like a darkish discus, or some other thing that would be quite unintelligible but for our old recollections.

The hands of St. John, St. Jerome, and St. Mary, are somewhat affected: their fingers are rather too

lengthy, and are crooked with too much of Michael Angelesque angularity. The Madonna's left hand holds a palm-branch—the symbol (not of martyrdom, of course, for she was not martyred, but) of *victory*, over Sin and Death. But what is there in that of Jesus Christ? We can scarcely make it out: unless, however, we mistake, it is a little book, and is probably meant either for the rubric of Rome, or the bible of St. Jerome. But we will return to this consideration, anon.

Saint Jerome sleeps within his hermitage, with a skull before, and a crucifix beside him, which latter he embraces with his right arm and hand; the other hand being over his head, and perhaps engaged in holding a rope, of which legends tell. His beard is aged and grey; and his robust figure rather awkwardly twisted and fore-shortened. The cell and mossy couch of the hermit, and the weeds of the fore ground, are painted in a masterly style.

In the character and expression of the Baptist's countenance, there is a degree of mystic sublimity, which, combined with that which is expressed by his action, is pertinent and fine, and his curling locks are divinely clustered, yet with an appropriate air of wildness: his limbs are vigorously moulded; but his prominent knee and leg are a little deficient in anatomical marking. We fear that neither Michael Angelo nor Professor Green, would be quite satisfied with them.

The holy Catholic church adopted that article of their faith which taught them to venerate the Madonna as "the Queen of Heaven;" not from the sacred Scriptures, for by the Scriptures it is nowhere authorized; but they caught the regal title from the

ancient Sabæan superstition, with which the Jews, during their aberrations from the worship of Jehovah, were deeply infected, and which deemed Ashteroth, or Astarte, to be the Queen, (and Baal the King) of Heaven: an honour which descended to the Homeric Juno, and through the Homeric Juno, as transmitted by the numismatic art, to the modern Virgin Mary. The humble Mary of Nazareth—"blessed amongst women," was supposed, by this regal investment with a terrestrial title, to be duly exalted amongst men.

Parmegiano, either aware or unaware of these circumstances, has, in common with many other Italian and German artists of this early period, adopted the idea of representing the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven, from combining the coinage, (*vide* Spanheim) with the Scriptures, of remote antiquity, and has seated his Madonna, as the Tyrian Astarte was seated, upon a *crescent moon*. Mr. Valpy's compiler—uninformed probably of these circumstances, and not immediately perceiving the difference between a rainbow and a crescent moon—Mr. Valpy's editor, or compiler, in *his* National Gallery, says, the Madonna is seated on a *bow* in the clouds—as if any artist at any time, would have dared venture to invert the bow of Heaven. The new moon is in good poetic analogy with the subject, it being the point of commencement of a new cycle.

The enthroned Virgin—the Christian Queen of Heaven—looks down majestically, yet with condescending celestial benignity, toward St. John, the former predestined harbinger of her sainted Son, while the Baptist points upward at the beatified infant; but the infant Christ himself, though preeminently graceful, has perhaps a trifle too much of

the prepared and studied air of the dancing-school, and thus exemplifies what we have written a few pages back; and why he has advanced his left leg and foot, as if in the act of stepping toward the fur-clad saint, we are at some loss to conceive—unless it have any especial reference to what the holy hermit in the cavern below may be dreaming.

Thus we fancied that every reflecting spectator would argue with himself concerning the picture of the Vision of St. Jerome; and would, in consequence, desire to know what the canonized hermit really *did* dream on this depicted occasion. Accordingly, we held communion with the saints.

But the rubrics and the black-letter legends affording us no light as to this glorious vision, we are led to infer that it arose out of those religious reveries ~~which served~~ the dark middle ages in the stead of poetry; and that ~~probably~~ the superiors of the church of Citta di Castello, who were patrons of the Vulgate, and for whom the pictured dream was painted, dreamed, that St. Jerome dreamed, that St. John pointed out to him, that *his translation* of the Bible had reached the celestial regions, and that he saw it there on the lap of the Virgin, as she sat in glory on the holy mount. Tasso, who lived just after Parmegiano, gives us the then existing tone of Italian intellect concerning such matters, where he sings—as faithfully rendered by friend Wiffen—that

——“Piety supplies

The heavenly lustre that irradiates thought;
Nor doubts that Heaven itself the marvellous action wrought.”

But, should this not prove satisfactory; and should we be called upon to tell how the holy churchmen

came to dream thus, and to detail as well as divine the forgotten dream, it would but increase the probability of the actual occurrence of the vision, if in humble imitation of the prophet Daniel, we should merely report what every one of our readers would have dreamed under similar circumstances.

When polemic controversy with Origen and his disciples, drove Jerome from Rome, he migrated to the Holy Land, and betaking himself to ascetic devotion, became an eremitic inhabitant of the very same desert which had formerly resounded with the Baptist's warnings to repentance. While thus resigned to the reveries of enthusiasm, and with his imagination thus stimulated by the localities of scenery and privation, he probably believed that he had discovered and lodged himself in the very cavern that had served the precursor of the Saviour for a bedchamber; and, sleeping and meditating there—if the votaries of Trophonius, under similar circumstances, dreamed of Elysian mysteries—how could St. Jerome do otherwise than dream that the Baptist—the great promulgator of “glad tidings”—appeared to him, and imparted the welcome intelligence that his translation of the Holy Scriptures had been well received in Heaven? Does not this sufficiently account for the Saviour's resting his right hand on the little volume on the lap of the Madonna?—If this be not the dream, and this the interpretation thereof, let the Chaldeans and soothsayers be called.

But one of the old black-letter authorities, which I consulted whilst in quest of this vision, informed me that Jerome—*Hieronymus*—literally means both the *Vision of Beauty* and the *Law of Holiness*: in

which case we have here a sort of painted equivoke, as well as a pun upon the proper name of this sainted hermit.

This capital work of Francisco Mazzuoli (surnamed Parmegiano, or Parmegianino) was painted at Rome, during the years 1526-7, as an altar-piece for a church at Cetta di Castello. Who imported it into England, we do not know : but it was purchased (at the price of two thousand guineas, if we rightly remember) some few years ago by the governors of the British Institution, and presented by those gentlemen to the National Gallery.

PORTRAITS, OF THE PAINTER, AND OF CARDINAL
HIPPOLITO DE MEDICIS.

SEBASTIAN LUCIANO DEL PIOMBO.

THIS distinguished painter, whose name is respected, but whose works are little known, in England, was born at Venice, in the year 1485. His paternal name was *Luciano* ; but early in his career as an artist, he was styled (agreeably to the custom of the age in which he lived) *Veneziano*, from his birth-place ; and, later in life, *del Piombo*, from his obtaining the honourable office of *Fraté del Piombo*.

Sebastian was distinguished in his youth as a musician, and, like Da Vinci, was particularly famed for his performance on the lute ; but he chose Painting for his profession, and was instructed in the rudiments of that art by Giovanni Bellini. Giorgione, however, shining forth, and his new mode of colouring attracting great notice, and very general admiration,

Veneziano became his disciple, and soon acquired, in the new style, a degree of masterly power and felicity of handling, and a corresponding degree of renown, both in the painting of portraits and historical subjects.

His first public essays were in portraiture; and his portraits were much admired for their strength of resemblance to the originals; and for a certain sweetness and plenitude of style with which they were executed—so much resembling the work of Giorgione as to give rise to frequent mistakes concerning their authorship, among the Italian connoisseurs.

Of this, the picture before us—comprehending the likenesses of Sebastian himself, and of his liberal patron Cardinal Hippolito de Medicis—is a pregnant instance; appearing rather more like a genuine Giorgione than even his own Martyrdom of Peter the Dominican,—so possible is it, in painting, as in moral conduct—while we regard pictures and actions severally—for two individuals to resemble each other, more than the same individual always resembles himself. Another seemingly anomalous fact is, that these portraits scarcely appear to be from the same palette as that of a noble lady by del Piombo, which was used to hang nearly opposite. Yet it is very possible that the gentlemen were florid, and the lady so fair, in complexion, as to account for the difference.

The present picture evidently represents some biographical incident which has given occasion for the Cardinal and the Painter to meet, and to refer to a parchment deed, which lies unfolded on a carpeted table between them. The two faces receive, of course, conspicuous portions of light, and this local incident

has afforded to the artist an opportunity of introducing a third breadth of light with good effect, and which prevents the two former from appearing like painted spots.

Fine Art and Literature have been duly grateful to the illustrious house of de Medicis. Their portraits, their names, and their generous patronage, have been transmitted with honour, as connected with most of the great works that were produced during the period of their splendid ascendancy. Our countryman Roscoe—with kindred feelings as a noble minded merchant, has become their biographer ; and our historian Gibbon, has enshrined their memory in a perspicuous and magnificent sentence, which will—or, at least, should—long serve to excite the emulation of the powerful and the wise. They were a family (he says) of opulent merchants, who governed a republic without arms, whose credit was ennobled into fame, and whose riches were dedicated to the service of mankind. For loftier moral praise we might elsewhere seek in vain. But Roscoe compels us to some abatement from this ideal beauty ; for with more strict regard to truth, he has shown that there was much which was very exceptionable in the moral and political conduct of the de Medicis.

The Cardinal Hippolito, his right hand holding a pen, here places a finger of his left, on the point at issue, or common centre of pleasurable attraction, between him and Sebastian : but there is nothing about this latter figure, or his dress, to denote the *Painter*. It is a fine head : but looks more like that of a learned doctor, or venerable privy counsellor, habited in his black, or raven-grey, cloak.

After a little reflection, we think that the picture

is not unlikely to represent and commemorate, the artist's accession to the office of *Fraté del Piombo*; the law-deed to be that of his appointment, and his dress, the proper costume of his office. He is known to have received the appointment late in life: he died in the year 1547, at the age of sixty-two, and he does not here appear to be much short of that age. Yes:—We can *now* see nothing else in this picture than two biographical portraits. The engrossed parchments before them are two, which the parties are executing, and about to exchange. The hand of Sebastian is on the seal of one, and he seems as if declaring, that by the delivery thereof, he entered into the engagements therein specified. To the other, Hippolito is about to affix his signature. His right hand holds the pen in readiness, while his left is placed on the part of the parchment to be subscribed.

The Cardinal is here attired in his proper paraphernalia of a short red cloak, with a white under vest having sleeves, while the back-ground, a dark green curtain, shows off this and his red cap, and other smaller portions of that colour, which enter into the picture, to advantage, and holds the whole in harmony. The draperies throughout, are cast and painted with much taste and talent; and the carpet-covered table, takes up the colours which are elsewhere spread in masses, with good effect.

Hippolito, although a spurious offspring, became an acknowledged branch of the family of de Medicis, and, like the rest of his kindred, acquired, within the limits of a short life, a considerable share of reputation. Dignified with the rank of cardinal, and possessed, by the partiality of Clement VII., of

an immense revenue, he became at once the patron, the companion, and the rival, of all the poets, the musicians, and the wits of his time. Among these patronised companions, was Sebastian Veneziano. Without territories, and without subjects, the cardinal maintained, at Bologna, a court far more splendid than that of any Italian potentate: his associates and attendants—all of whom could boast of *some peculiar merit* or distinction which had entitled them to his notice—formed a body of about three hundred persons. Shocked at his profusion, which only the revenues of the church were competent to supply, Clement admonished him, and by means of a trusty agent, required the dismissal of some of his numerous attendants, as being unnecessary. “I do not retain them because I have occasion for their services, but because they have occasion for mine,” was the liberal reply of Hippolito. He was afterwards poisoned, at the real or supposed instigation of his relative and rival, Alessandro de Medicis.

PORTRAIT OF JULIA GONZAGA,

AS A SAINTED MARTYR.

SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO.

It appears that this lady was high in the favour of Cardinal Hippolito de Medicis (whose portrait we have just dismissed). That he, or Sebastiano, should have chosen to pay her the religious compliment (if these words may, without impropriety, be thus united) of transmitting her to posterity as a martyr and a saint, might have excited the reader's surprise, had

we not, in treating of Mazzolini of Ferrara, rendered him aware of the prevalence of this species of poetic fiction in Italy.

The commentators have not specified what saint the Lady Julia impersonates, but a little reflection brings us to the conclusion, that *Cecilia* must be meant, and that for the following reasons. 1st, The Italian painters, with whom their musical saint, Cecilia, was a favourite subject, have universally represented her with the handsome cast of features which we here behold, and as here represented, bearing a palm branch, symbolical both of her martyrdom and her musical triumphs. 2dly, Cecilia was, throughout Europe, regarded as the christian patroness of the art to which both Hippolito and Sebastian were devotedly attached, she having taken the organ from Tubal Cain, and the harp from the hands of Apollo. 3dly, and perhaps principally, her legend says, what was then generally believed—that she was visited nocturnally by an *angel*, who brought with him wreaths of roses and lilies from the garden of Eden—so that an insidious compliment to the cardinal also, was thus conveyed with much address on the part of the painter.

Gonzaga is here depicted rather larger than life, with a fine matronly, and somewhat majestic, cast of countenance, that would almost have suited a Zenobia; her head rises nobly from her shoulders, as if on a Tuscan column, and she is habited in a quiet green dress, which, being perfectly unobtrusive, sets off the carnation tints to advantage. This dress—which also looks like a portrait, or matter of fact—is trimmed with green a little more vivid than itself; and it is not unlikely that the artist, seeing how well it became

the Lady Julia, desired her to sit in it: for where the woman is fine, her dress needs not be so.

This portrait, dictated by good taste and simplicity, and far aloof from all meretriciousness, was celebrated long before it was brought to England; and deserves its celebrity. It is mentioned by tourists as "a divine performance, full of life and character." Professor Phillips, of course an excellent judge of such matters, says, that "Sebastian finished his works with great care, folding his draperies with peculiar felicity, and giving great truth and exactness of action to the heads and hands." These praises are, in most points, applicable to the work before us, of which the hand is not less noticeable than the face. And the historian of Italian Art, records that Del Piombo "painted portraits and pictures for private rooms in great numbers, and with comparative ease; and we no where meet with more beautiful hands, more rosy flesh-tints, or more novel accessories than in these." In truth, notwithstanding that the partiality, or the policy of Michael Angelo, or his own professional ambition, induced Sebastian to undertake historical works, *Portrait-painting* was his *forte*.

There is a parallelism in the present picture, between St. Cecilia's palm-branch and the light edge of her veil that is near it, which is not quite agreeable, or consonant to the rules of art.

This picture, as well as the portraits of the Artist and Cardinal Hippolito, was in the Carr collection, and both came originally from the Borghese palace,

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS.

SEBASTIAN DEL PIOMBO.

(FROM THE DESIGN OF MICHAEL ANGELO.)

CONCERNING this celebrated work, the opinions of at least three gentlemen, respected for their taste and picture-knowledge, are before the public. We have of course read them, as in duty bound. They are not concordant; and not having the honour to coincide perfectly with either of them, it seems incumbent upon us to offer some reasons for our differing, the occasion being of importance; since we cannot dissemble, or affect to admire, what we do not feel or judge to be really admirable. Neither can we implicitly adopt sentiments that are not our own—like the literary *apothecaries*, whom we purpose to notice in a future page.

After a word or two respecting the previous attainments in art of the painter—or chief painter—of this remarkable picture, we will treat of the conception of the subject; the design; effect; execution; and the varying opinions respecting them.

The principal biographer of the Roman and Venetian artists, records of Sebastian, that he was “the most distinguished disciple of the school of Giorgione, to whose tuition he attached himself, after quitting Giovanni Bellini; and in the tone of his colours, and the fulness of his forms, imitated him better than any other artist. [He does not except Titian]. An altarpiece in San Gio Chrisostomo, from his hand, was by some mistaken for the work of his master, so strikingly does it abound with his manner. It may

be presumed, indeed, that he was assisted in the design, Sebastian being known to possess no surprising richness of invention; slow in the composition of most of his figures, irresolute, eager to undertake, but difficult to commence, and most difficult in the completion."

Now the absence that is here implied of the noun-substantive faculty of genius, infers precisely the state and condition of mind on the part of Sebastian, which requires the extraneous support of another mind to lean against:—But let us not anticipate.

Professor Phillips here takes up the progress of the Venetian, and informs us, that "by the persuasion of Agostino Ghizi [which, according to Lanzi, should be written Chigi], a rich merchant of Sienna, he was induced to visit Rome, where the novelty of his style, and his skill in execution, soon drew him into public notice. In the contest of opinion which took place at that time, concerning the superiority in merit of Raphael or Michael Angelo, Sebastian gave the preference to the latter, and gained his esteem and support. In consequence, he was favoured by him on all occasions; and so highly estimated, that he stimulated him to the rash attempt of rivalling Raphael; particularly by painting a picture in competition with that great man's last great work, the Transfiguration, which had just been placed with considerable éclat in the church of San Pietro à Montono. The subject Sebastian chose was the Resurrection of Lazarus, for which Michael Angelo is supposed to have furnished the design, or at least to have considered and retouched it. The picture is of the same size as Raphael's; and when completed was placed in the same consistory, and was very

highly applauded. The Cardinal de Medicis sent it to his bishopric of Narbonne, and it became the property of the Duke of Orleans, and subsequently of J. J. Angerstein, Esq. who gave two thousand guineas for it to the proprietors of the Orleans Collection. Although it is a work of profound skill; and highly preserves the reputation of its author; yet, in our opinion, it is not to be compared with the great work it was intended to rival, either in design, in expression, or effect, whatever may be said of its execution." Thus far Professor Phillips.

We have perused other accounts of the origin, progress, and subsequent history, of this picture of the Resurrection of Lazarus, but they all concur in the two main points, that Michael Angelo and Sebastian united their talents with the view of eclipsing Raphael; and ~~that, in the opinion of some of the best critics~~—and of the majority of the critics—they have failed of their purpose, although it is readily granted that they have produced a noble work.

Concerning this famous competition, we shall probably have nothing more to say, or but little, since it is merely incidental to our subject. Ours must be a more abstract and isolated view of the production of Sebastian: and first, with regard to the conception of the subject—

We think that the depicted moment of time, has been *injudiciously chosen*. Sebastian has not painted the *miracle*, but contented himself with showing some of its immediate *consequences, to the neglect of the most important*. Instead of painting the miracle, as Rubens, Lievens, Rembrandt, and other artists have done, Michael Angelo and Sebastian del Piombo call upon us to *assume* the resurrection of Lazarus,

and *attend* to—certain sceptical disputations, and factious altercations, which ensued thereupon.

Neither is any thing gained by this assumption, speaking either pictorially or religiously. On the contrary, instead of rendering the power and the glory of our Lord and Saviour *more* manifest, *more* impressive, and *more* worthy of belief, than it was before the miracle, it is apparently rendered *less* so—unless it be to a very few of those who are assembled. Instead of the old Hebrew factions of Sadducees and Pharisees—of which the former professed to deny, or proscribe all faith in, the doctrine of the resurrection—being silenced and dismayed by that of Lazarus, we see that they have already resumed their eager disputations, and that conviction has not reached far, nor proselytism made any progress. Instead of an awe-struck multitude, suddenly invaded by devotional sentiment, holding up and spreading forth their hands in speechless wonder, we see but a single individual in that action—perhaps the most expressive and appropriate figure in the whole composition, although that of a subordinate personage—a mere by-stander. The rest are, for the most part, unconvinced, disputatious wranglers, to join whom, Caiaphas the priest, is descending the steps of the necropolis, on the right hand, conducted by a zealot. Even the holy women (Martha and the Marys), who are approaching, and who are obviously not yet apprized of the resuscitation of their beloved friend, are made to appear somewhat incredulous; or why do they muffle up their nostrils, as if they expected—ay, as if they *expected*—notwithstanding the admonition and the assurance that Martha had recently received, that her “brother should rise again”—as if they expected,

what? Not the reanimation of Lazarus, but—an offensive odour! One would really think that Sebastian, or his master, or both, wished to show how *little* diffusion of Christianity was effected by this *greatest* of the miracles of Christ.

The subject of the resurrection of Lazarus, is in itself, transcendently striking! and, had it been ably treated, would have been well chosen as a companion and rival to Raphael's Transfiguration; because, next to the bright and mystic change, which has been termed *transfiguration*—to which Raphael, with admirable tact, has added the more picturesque and more extraordinary miracle of self-support, or spiritual buoyancy in the air—next to this wonder—and we should probably say next *before* it—the recalling of a human being to life, who had been dead and buried four days, was a most astonishing occurrence!! It would have been so at any time; but in the then existing state of human sentiment with regard to futurity, it became trebly important, for reasons which we shall proceed to adduce. The subject of Sebastian's picture, then, is *in itself* of the *utmost consequence*, but is here treated rather in a Jewish, than in a Christian, spirit.

With the exception of a few *Essenes*, the Hebrew public were, in the time of Jesus Christ, mainly divided into two sects, or factions, termed *Pharisees*, and *Sadducees*. The former believing in *immortality*; the latter *not*, but professing to adhere strictly to the law of Moses, wherein no mention is made of this divine mystery. Gibbon, on the authority chiefly of Josephus, writes, that after Cyrus had permitted the exiled nation to return into the promised land, and after Ezra had restored the ancient records of their

religion, two celebrated sects—the Sadducees and the Pharisees, arose at Jerusalem. The former, who claimed the most opulent and distinguished part of the society, were strictly attached to the literal sense of the Mosaic law, and they piously rejected the immortality of the soul, as an opinion that received no countenance from the divine book which they revered as the only rule of their faith. To the authority of scripture, the Pharisees added that of tradition, and they accepted, under the name of traditions, several speculative tenets from the philosophy or religion of the eastern nations. The doctrines of fate or predestination, of angels and spirits, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, were in the number of these new articles of belief; and as the Pharisees, by the austerity of their manners, had drawn into their party the body of the Jewish people, the immortality of the soul became the prevailing sentiment of the synagogue under the reign of the Asmonean princes and pontiffs. The temper of the Jews was incapable of contenting itself with such a cold and languid assent, as might satisfy the mind of a polytheist; and as soon as they admitted the idea of a future state, they embraced it with the zeal which has always formed the characteristic of the nation. Their zeal, however, added nothing to its evidence, or even probability: and it was still necessary that the doctrine of life and immortality, which had been dictated by nature, approved by reason, and received by superstition, should obtain the sanction of divine truth from the authority and example of Christ.

The resurrection of Lazarus was *therefore* an ADVENT of *cardinal* importance in the history of religion and of man. The unprecedented recalling “back to

its mansion" of a soul that had been four days absent from it, while it overwhelmed the Sadducees with conviction and discomfiture, should in the same degree have affected the Pharisees with confirmation and triumph. All who witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus—and the designer of the present work was not restricted as to the number of witnesses he might have produced—but on the contrary was left at full liberty: he might if he had so pleased—he was fully authorised by the New Testament—have introduced more of the disciples of Christ than the solitary Evangelist St. John, (or he who has been thus named by Sebastian's commentators :) but—ALL who *witnessed* the astounding miracle should have appeared—as they really must have become on the instant—*rev'rent and adoring proselytes to Christianity*: instead of which, what do we here behold? only three or four figures of this description, out of the multitude (amounting to more than thirty within the limits of the picture) who are present. The rest are incredulous disputants, whom the most convincing of miracles has failed to convince and convert from their habitual wranglings. It may be said, that many of these disputants are only approaching, and may be expected to become converts when they arrive at the scene of action: but still our question recurs, of why there are not *more near and wonder-struck observers* introduced, of various ages and stations? why the *miracle itself* is not more impressive rendered?

The Sepulchre of Lazarus, as Sebastian has represented it, is neither picturesque, nor conformable to known Hebrew usages, or to the text of St. John. In fact, the spectator is obliged to hunt about in order to discover any thing at all resembling a tomb,

coffin, or place of sepulture; and after all to take for granted that Lazarus must be sitting on the edge of his own sarcophagus: meanwhile the text plainly suggests a rocky necropolis, near the town of Bethany. Nay, more than this, the Evangelist expressly mentions "a cave;" and Rubens, Rembrandt, and more recently Mr. Haydon, has accordingly painted one of those cavern sepulchres, within which, small chambers for individual corpses were chiselled out of the native rock. Of such in Judea the remains are still numerous, (Mr. Bowyer has published some from the drawings brought home by Sir Robert Ainslie;) beside which, we should not forget that the reanimating words, "Lazarus, come forth!" appear to imply that he was laid within one of those excavated tombs, of which the entrance was closed by a stone, such as ~~that wherein~~ Joseph of Arimathea afterward laid the body of Jesus himself.

True it is, there was an austerity about the taste and mental constitution of Michael Angelo, which inclined him to dispense with what other artists regard as desirable accessories; not merely to avoid, but to treat with an air of rejection all that, according to his own conceptions, was not *essential*; and disposed him to regard scarcely any thing as being essential, that did not take the human form divine. And the reader will do well to reflect how far this principle may be admitted here, as vindication, or apology, or worthy of homage?—But we must now revert to our critical argument, that the depicted moment has been injudiciously chosen by the designers of this resurrection of Lazarus.

A picture should tell its own story; and is supposed or expected to tell its story independently

of the extraneous knowledge, or the accidental, or contingent points of ignorance, of the individual who may chance to contemplate it. It should in no degree depend—or depend as little as possible—upon what he may chance to know, or be ignorant of. The painter of a miracle of a dead man brought to life, is not privileged to assume that those who gaze at his picture of a living man, know that that living man has been dead and buried. And Sebastian has in fact assumed this miracle as well as the other, unless it might be supposed that his Lazarus sitting dubiously on the fancied edge of a doubtful stone coffin, were sufficient to satisfy us of these important facts.

Of those who have attempted the sublime subject of the Resurrection of Lazarus, *Lievens*, in stimulating our imaginations through the optic sense, has touched the true chord; and Michael Angelo has missed it, and lost the music of our responsiveness. *Lievens**, ere the words of the Saviour, “Lazarus, come forth!” have died in the echo, and while the commanding action which accompanied the divine mandate, is subsiding, has with consummate address indicated the commencement of reanimation, by simply raising the emaciated hand of Lazarus to the edge of the sarcophagus, and showing no more of him—excepting what is seen reflected in the countenances of the by-standers. He has been aware that the more delicate the intimation, the better, provided it conveyed the idea of the incipency of revivification.

* There are various engravings of this subject after *Lievens*: but the original picture is in the possession of Mr. Knowles, the biographer of Fuseli.

The two Italian illustrators of the scripture, on the other hand, have missed the music which our better sense would have responded. How?—By striking on two dissonant keys at once. By painting Lazarus as having completely risen—how, or from whence, those who are not versed in the writings of the Evangelists, or who do not bear in mind what they have read, are left to surmise—and at the same time representing Jesus Christ as apparently addressing him.

But not only those who do *not* recollect what they have read in St. John's Gospel, are called upon to surmise why a man, partially enwrapped with grave-clothes, is placed before them; but those who *do* so recollect, are required to sink their own reflections on what they have read, and implicitly to adopt the reflections—or want of reflection—of the two Italian artists. Hence if those two have led into erroneous comments and false conclusions, an artist and a gentleman who is known to be highly competent to the task of appreciating and explaining the technic merits of Michael Angelo, how much more must they have puzzled and misled those inferior men who have been taught to think that the great Florentine neither did nor dictated aught but what was admirable.

Mr. Ottley, seeing by the action of Michael Angelo's or Del Piombo's Jesus Christ, that he seems to be addressing Lazarus, and aware of the inadmissibility of our supposing that he pronounces the super-human call, "Lazarus, come forth!" *after* Lazarus *has* come forth, is driven to the refuge of fancying that "the Saviour standing in the midst, appears to be addressing him after his return to con-

sciousness, in words, as may be supposed, not unlike those which he had before used to Martha: "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth on me shall live though he die."—But is this probable? Is it *credible*? Would there not be something of absurdity in our supposing that Jesus Christ used such language to his friend Lazarus, *under such circumstances*, whether we regard it as enigmatic or persuasive? Or that he offered the assurance contained in the second member of the sentence, even to any other person present, who had *witnessed* the supernatural and astounding manifestation that had just occurred! Far less would Omniscience have offered it to him who had so recently *experienced* the animating thrill of resuscitation, and was even then under its consternating operation. When there is such absolute certainty as Lazarus had just felt, and as other men had seen, there can remain no room for scepticism, or assurance, or admonition, or faith. The reversal of a law of nature in favour of a beloved individual, is here before us in ocular proof: and "Faith (saith the apostle) is the evidence of things *unseen*." The moment for faith or belief in his divine mission, to have displayed itself, was that *before* the miracle, when Jesus Christ required it of Martha, the sister of Lazarus; *after* the miracle, and by those standing in his presence who had witnessed it, there was no room for *disbelief*, and consequently no room for faith.

The truth, however, is, that Mr. Ottley has altogether misconceived this matter,—misled perhaps by his profound reverence for Michael Angelo; or for two distinguished artists who have, in this instance, let slip the pregnant and important moment of mira-

culous manifestation. In Lievens, the emaciated hand of Lazarus is just raised ; in Rubens, obedient to the mighty call, he is stepping forth from the cavern on the instant. In both, the Saviour appears as the sublime agent of super-human power, and the obvious and incontestable author, or proximate cause, of the resuscitation of Lazarus. These critical, valuable, and wonder-fraught moments, are avoided, or have eluded the introspection of the designer of the work before us. We see a result, or effect, of which the cause is not obvious, but assumed on the strength of our own supposed reading. The picture does not illumine the literature ; but the literature is relied upon for the illustration of the picture ; and its author having let the miracle slip through his fingers, his commentators—the scholiasts—have been at a loss where to look for it. “ He that was dead ” *has* “ come forth, bound hand and foot, with grave-clothes, and his face bound about with a napkin.” The moment of miracle has been permitted to pass, or has given way to its succedent ; and though Jesus Christ is pointing toward Lazarus, he is not *addressing* him, as Mr. Ottley had been led to imagine ; but is saying to those sextons, or assistants, who had just before lifted away “ the stone from the place where the dead was laid ”—“ *Loose him*, and let him go : ” accompanying the words with appropriate action.

One of the sisters of Lazarus has at the same instant sunk on her knees before the Saviour, in the fervency of her gratitude : her face has little of female beauty, but may perhaps not be the less affecting on that account. Mr. Ottley calls her Mary ; and it does not matter much whether we regard the

kneeling figure as being intended for Mary, or Martha: it is clearly one of the sisters of the resuscitated, and we rather think it is meant for Martha, because with Martha the Saviour had been conversing the moment before the miracle, and she would naturally fall on her knees in gratitude immediately afterward, the more especially as she had subjected herself to some reproof on account of her recent misgivings. Aye—this idea affords us light. Here lies the true meaning of this awe-stricken and Michael-Angelesque countenance.

The expression of her brother Lazarus *should* have something emphatical about it; (he being, next to the Saviour himself, the hero of the piece,) and so it *has*. But is the emphasis of the *right kind*? Does it express the *first emotions of an amiable and beloved man, recalled from cold obstruction to "the warm precincts of the cheerful day,"* and with those who were nearest and dearest to his affections, immediately before him? Or is there not something ambiguous here?—On these points, every one will, of course, feel and judge for himself; but we should think it not quite right, entirely to cancel our first impression concerning this figure, and its expression. The reader will therefore please to regard it as confession, that, to our first view, there was something dismal and fearful about this countenance of Lazarus, which we would say extended to the action of the figure; but for the latter there is this salvo, or perhaps more positive merit, that the eagerness of Lazarus to embrace his nearest relatives and best friends, may be supposed to account for it, by making him feel impatient of the restraint of his bandages. Yet who will say that there is not too much preference of *refinement* to

simplicity in this idea? But the action of the figure should harmonize with the expression of the face; and the question here is, whether it does so harmonize?

The degree of impatience expressed about the legs and feet of Lazarus, coincides with the record of St. John, that they were bandaged, and also accords with the direction which—agreeably to the above construction—is issuing from the mouth of Jesus Christ, to “*loose him*, and let him go;” which had been better translated—unbind him and let him be at liberty; or, set his limbs at liberty: for, let him go, when taken with the equivocal action in which del Piombo has placed his Lazarus—conveys too much the idea of his being supposed to wish to get away, from those best friends who are present. Further,—in accounting for the peculiar look and action of this remarkable figure—it is pretty well known to critical observers that Michael Angelo would let slip no available opportunity of displaying energy. Energy, the Cleopatra for which he lost the world; or the Hercules by whom he gained it.

Hazlitt, however, has given the account most favourable to the author of the work before us, of this dubious and Dante-like expression of countenance; and it is but fair, after finding faults, to affix it, for the reader's consideration. He says, “Lazarus gazes eagerly about him, and looks out from his shrouded prison, on this new [new-old] world, with hurried amazement, as if death had scarcely yet resigned his power over the senses.” This is fine; and, on the whole it behoves us modestly to reflect here on the intrinsic work of the trite adage, that “second thoughts are best;” and, offer the critical

reader the opportunity of putting aside *our* first impression—leaving him to adopt, if he should so please, the construction of our fervent friend Hazlitt; and to bow before the majesty of Michael Angelo, who, in the nudities of this fine figure of Lazarus—and more particularly in the markings of his legs and body, has displayed the perfection of that academic power which he so preeminently possessed.

Yet, of the dingy colour of this reanimated figure, and that of the three men who are assisting in releasing him from the bondage of his remaining grave-clothes, we cannot think favourably; or arrive at any satisfactory reason why these four individuals should appear with Asiatic features and African complexions. Their sepulchral occupation does not necessarily imply vampire looks; nor does any overshadowing circumstance account for this swart dinginess: neither is our late friend happy in his figurative mode of expressing his approbation of the colouring of Lazarus when he writes “the flesh is well-baked, dingy, and ready to crumble from the touch when it is liberated from its dread confinement to have life and motion impressed on it again.” This is substituting fine language for correct thinking, and it seems as if the painters had so managed as to make Hazlitt forget the life and motion that has already raised Lazarus from the tomb, and seated him where we behold. They must have taught him to fancy (with Mr. Ottley) that Lazarus was yet but *half alive*—the miracle having been but imperfectly performed, and still in progress; and that instead of coming forth by power divinely imparted, the *patient* had been lifted from his tomb, as from a bed of sickness.

Mr. Ottley writes of the figure of Lazarus, that it

is "represented sitting on the stone coffin which had contained his body, *supported* by three men; and that it is a master-piece, as well for the invention as the execution; and forms with the men employed to unbind him, the most prominent group of the picture. The hand of Michael Angelo (he adds) is apparent in every part of this figure; (and the same may be said of that of the man who is releasing the legs of Lazarus,) and it cannot be doubted that the Florentine artist, finding Sebastiano utterly incompetent to give to it that energy of character and intelligence in the naked parts which he desired, *seized* his pencils whilst the colours were still in a moist state, and with that prodigious power which he had acquired by his long practice in fresco-painting, modelled the head, limbs, and body, in every part, leaving untouched* the kneeling figure of Mary in the middle of the composition and immediately behind [beyond] the figure of Lazarus, in order, perhaps, to prove by the comparison to such as should hereafter examine the work with attention, how little the Venetian could have achieved without his aid."

Michael Angelo then,—the terrible Michael Angelo—the Homer of painting—must have been sadly hampered between his desire that Sebastian should excel Raphael, and his wish to prove how little the Venetian could have effected without his aid: and his mind must have been constituted in such a way as to deserve to be hampered. If Buonarrotti really thought so little of, and for, the public; and so much

* In this case Sebastian must have affected Michael Angelo's angular energy of gusto. In one of the fingers of this figure it is carried to a painful excess; seeming to an unenthusiastic eye, as if her finger had been broken and ill set.

of and for himself, the human powers have not yet been stretched in this direction to their utmost, and there is room for a greater name in Art than that of Michael Angelo. But, verily, these are points no longer susceptible of that direct evidence, and that positive proof, with which alone the connoisseur is satisfied. We would not willingly be censorious—either doubly, or singly—not even in a slight degree, unless it were to accomplish some public and important purpose; but, it is possible that the louder call here, upon our judgment as well as sympathy, may be to save Michael Angelo from his friends. We may not here have settled an old artistical controversy; but, if not, we perhaps may have diminished its importance; or shall do so ere we have done. The visiter of the National Gallery, certainly beholds in this picture, the joint labours of at least Luciano and Michael Angelo; (but we shall have more to say on these points :) and Mr. Ottley is assuredly a far better judge than the pen-parroting compilers who have adventured to oppose his opinion, that the great Florentine afforded practical assistance to his friend in the execution of the picture before us. Michael Angelo's *mind*, is known to have been amply furnished with those means of accomplishment, and that manly resolution, wherein Sebastian, according to his biographers, was deficient: and the manual power of using pencils, is almost as nothing, when compared with this. He who can draw with charcoal or with chalk-crayons, can easily draw with hair-pencils.

The professor Fuseli, too, is, on this point, entirely with Mr. Ottley, and that, without having occasion to ascribe Michael Angelo's ability in oil painting,

to his long practice in fresco-painting. He writes, "That Michael Angelo had a sense for the beauties of oil-colour—its glow, its juice, its richness, its pulp—the praises which he lavished on Titiano, whom he called the *only painter*, and his patronage of Frá Sebastian himself, evidently prove. When young M. Angelo attempted oil-painting with success; the picture painted for Angelo Doni is an instance, and probably the only entire work of the kind that remains. The Lazarus destined for the cathedral at Narbonne, rejects the claim of every other hand."

In the nudities of this fine figure of the re-animated Lazarus, and more particularly, in the markings of his legs, arms, and body, let us grant that Michael Angelo has displayed the perfection of that academic power which he so pre-eminently possessed, but (as in so many other of his works) he has not omitted to cite, and to restore, that celebrated antique *torso* of the Belvidere, which, from its having been almost the constant object of his study, is generally known by the name of Michael Angelo's School. Yes, this important figure of Lazarus, is, in its main points—at least as far as regards the body and thighs—a quotation from Apollonius: as if, having believed that he had found and possessed himself of, the essence of the grandeur of the human form, Buonarrotti had thought it superfluous to seek further and for other modes or manifestations of grandeur, and only necessary to vary the head and limbs, in order to adapt the *torso** to every contingency, and almost

* "Michael Angelo scattered the torso of Apollonius in every view, in every direction, in groups and single figures, over the composition of his Last Judgment."—Fuseli's Lectures.

to every possible occasion. As in his sleeper celestially awakened, so here, the right knee and thigh of his figure are projected and elevated to the same angle as in the Torso; the left limb is lowered obediently to the same authority; the right shoulder has a similar advancement forward; and the sway of the body has the same character of majestic grandeur, gently influenced by grace. The comparison, as far as respects the Dreamer and the Lazarus, may easily be made, by stepping from one room to another of the National Gallery.

This fact is not here alluded to in any presuming spirit of reprehension, or with the least intention of raising an objection against the general merits of this celebrated work of the Raising of Lazarus; but as a mere local and ~~professional anecdote, such as those persons who notice~~ pictures, may not be displeased to be informed of; and such as indeed it would not be well to omit. No. We are too much of the learned professor's opinion, that "an *adopted* figure, or idea, in a work of genius, is a *foil*, or a *companion*, to the rest." [Here it is a companion;] "We stamp the plagiary on the borrower, who, without fit materials, or adequate conceptions of his own, seeks to shelter impotence, under purloined vigour; we leave him with the full praise of invention, who by the harmony of a whole, proves that what he has adopted might have been his own offspring, though anticipated by another. If he take now, he soon may give."

And here we shall venture on the relation of another local anecdote, appertaining to the present picture. By the late Rev. W. Holwell Carr, to whose connoisseurship, and patriotic generosity, the visitors of the National Gallery, as well as the nation itself,

are so much indebted, I was informed of the facts—the *first* of which I find corroborated by Mr. Ottley,—that this picture of the Resurrection of Lazarus, had been originally painted on wood, and subsequently transferred to canvas; and *second*, that (the original surface being partially impaired by the process) it had undergone some repair from the pencil of the late president West. In fact, and to speak it plainly, the Lazarus of Michael Angelo, was not only dead, but was fast sinking into the ground, when *Mr. West* was empowered to stand before it, and again command Lazarus to “come forth.” And if Mr. Ottley was not acquainted with this circumstance, his encomium, backed as it is by that of the professor Fuseli, shows how well the president has succeeded in the accomplishment of an arduous task which few would have dared attempt, and which perhaps no other modern hand could so successfully have accomplished: yet before its late refreshment by a thin coat of varnish, all eyes might see that this part of the picture has been more freshly painted than the rest; neither should we at all despair, were it necessary, of being able to produce living witnesses, and legal proof, of West’s dextrous and successful restorations, which were not very *exactly* limited to the figure of Lazarus.

Moreover Mr. Carr, who *had* been much abroad, and who travelled chiefly to indulge his taste in pictures, writes of Raphael’s Transfiguration—the rival or companion to del Piombo’s Lazarus—that “it has suffered less by cleaning, than most of the other pictures which were removed during the Revolution; and not *having* been transferred from the panel to canvas, preserves more of the *original surface* of the

master, than those pictures which have undergone that operation ;—an ingenious contrivance, certainly, but which, however dextrously performed, has contributed to the premature destruction of some of the finest productions of Art.” Now, Michael Angelo’s corrections of Sebastian, were of course, confined to that “original surface;” or, more strictly speaking, they were that surface itself, in such passages as he found it expedient to retouch—having been painted over, or upon, the work of Luciano. It seems probable too, from the known estrangement of the great Florentine from the practice of oil-painting, that a less eligible vehicle than that of the Venetian, was employed in the liquifying and mingling of his pigments; and that hence, the chemical and mechanical operations indispensable from the transference—operations both arduous and hazardous—had so preyed upon, and impaired the parts that were corrected by Michael Angelo, as to give just occasion for putting the able pencil of the President in requisition.

The figure next in importance to that of Lazarus—although there is a species of impiety in this our arrangement, which we would willingly revoke, were it not too late—is that of the Saviour himself. It is, as it has been pronounced—“grave and earnest.” We know, that, on his first arrival at Bethany, he *wept*; relapsed into his humanity; “and forgot his power to save,” (as Dr. Langhorne has eloquently expressed;) we also know that recently before the depicted moment, he had thanked the Great Father for attending to the prayer which he had mentally uttered, and for the assurance he had silently received of the resuscitation of his friend; and, bearing these matters in mind, we incline to believe that

the designer intended we should understand the action with which Jesus Christ accompanied this appeal and the consequent recalling of the soul of his friend back to its mortal tenement—as *in transit*. When an artist can successfully suggest transition, (or slow motion,) he is almost invariably graceful and admirable—seeming to carry the art of painting beyond itself: and this slowly descending action of the right arm of Christ, is by no means incompatible with the command which he is issuing to rid Lazarus of his sepulchral swathings.

But yet—and notwithstanding all else that might be said, or sung, or imagined, on the subject—neither the figure, nor the countenance, of Jesus Christ, is sufficiently impressive and commanding for one in the prompt exercise of Deific power; and as painting possesses the means of expressing this miraculous energy—this unimpassioned, but superhuman power—chastely, and in a manner which sets all theatric swagger at an immense distance; as this is a lofty privilege which she shares with her elder sister of the chisel—it may fearlessly be asserted that the present is an occasion where she should not have laid aside an energy with which none other of the Muses is so pre-eminently endowed, nor have hidden her talent under a napkin; but should have let her light so shine before men, that they might see her good works and glorify—not only the parent art, but him who is here its proper subject. The figure of Jesus Christ, is not only too short in comparison with the rest, but is not sufficiently elevated in the composition, although placed on a pedestal of some six or eight inches; which pedestal we hope is not intended

for the lid of the stone coffin of Lazarus—though, where else shall we look for it?—Rembrandt has resorted to the other extreme in the Jesus Christ, of his Hebrew Woman detected in Adultery, with what advantage to the sentiment of his picture, the reader may see by simply glancing his eye across the room where both the pictures are at present exhibited.

As is observed above, not only have Michael Angelo and Sebastian suffered the important moment of miracle and wonder, to elapse; but its effects, or consequences, are by no means impressively and convincingly adduced. Of pertinent and expressive figures, as far as respects pictorial evidence of the accomplishment of the miracle, there is a most remarkable paucity. Out of more than thirty that enter into the composition, not above three or four appear to know, or to be duly impressed with the knowledge—that a man who had been interred four days, has been recalled to life! The rest are ignorant of the wonderful fact; or are unaffected by it; or are disputing it. The sister of Lazarus, and the two old men,—one of whom has fallen on his knees in the act of adoring a manifested Deity! and the other with upheld and outspread hands, and an awe-stricken countenance*, are the most remarkable, and almost the only, depicted evidences. But if *old age* would have been thus affected, should not the painters also have shown us what must have been the intense feelings of *youth*, and *adolescence*, and *manhood*, and *womanhood*, when in their prime, upon

* We have before expressed our admiration of this figure, and Michael Angelo has shown how much he was himself pleased with it, by re-introducing it in his Last Judgment.

an occasion so unprecedented—so transcendental! Assuredly, fewer sceptics and disputants, and a greater number of astonished eyewitnesses and proselytes, had been more to the purpose: assuredly, the miraculous occurrence should have taken a more unquestionable shape.

The hands of the back disputant on the left, who is forward to use them in aid of his logic, are somewhat too large for his figure; so is that of the man in blue, who stands next him, and is pointing downward. Between this man, and the fore ground group, is seen another, "who with a frankness of expression and gesture becoming an apostle of truth, appears answering objections raised against the credibility of the miracle, by a man who is addressing them." **This has been supposed to be intended for St. John the Evangelist, the recorder of the miraculous event; but appears somewhat too old, when we recollect how long this apostle survived in the island of Patmos. These localities may be well, but surely a more overwhelming accumulation of convincing circumstances, had been still better.**

The draperies are cast with an ability congenial and commensurate with that which gratifies us in the portrait-painting of Sebastian—though their folding is more in the style of Michael Angelo; and there is a certain deep-toned rich abruptness, resembling the archaism which we noticed in Julio Romano, in their colours, as in those of the landscape accessories, which would be not ill suited to the subject—if the lights and shadows sympathised: but in this respect, the performance is somewhat deficient. There is throughout, a want of those reflexes, both of light and colour,

from which harmony should result. The shadows are too universally of dark brown; there is throughout a deplorable want of air tint, and there is the same want of abatement in the lights as they recede from the eye, that there is in the darkness of the shades. The women who are muffling their olfactory nerves, from the diminution of their dimensions, and their ignorance of nearer occurrences, we are taught to think are at some distance; yet the lights on their head-gear, are as bright as the white drapery around the head of Lazarus. But as Coreggio, Claude, and the Poussins—the inventors of this aerial magic and dulcet blandishment—had not yet appeared, due allowance must be made. Sebastian should not, on this account, be too harshly judged. Hazlitt, who labours (a thing unusual with him) to think and speak well of this picture; or, attentive it may be, to Nature's kind call upon the benevolence of good taste for indulgence, would shelter its harshness of colour, the abruptnesses of its back-ground, and its severality, or want of aggregation into broader masses, under the term "*Mosaic*;"* and the reader who pleases, may—with the manes of Sebastian—accept of this soothing commendation, instead of the reflexes, provided he can get over the reactive *consideration*, that the sepulchral austerity of sentiment—the awe, and total absence of all mirthful emotion, which it is allowed should prevail through the shadows—should also have somewhat subdued the vividness of the lights; for the introduction of the vivid lights

* Qu. Did not Hazlitt mean to write *Archaic* here? I suspect he did.

and colours of human art, under circumstances of awful and superhuman sublimity, seem but like

———" Noise and folly,
When with the charm compar'd of heav'nly melancholy."

The contrivance—or want of contrivance—in the disposition of the *chiar-oscuro*, also discloses much of the immaturity of art; or, it may be, too lofty an assumption of scorn of its blandishments. In the mid-ground, the stems of a group of trees, which we are taught to suppose must be lofty, spring up from between the fissures of a rock: These trees, in nature, would have overshadowed the space of ground between the heads of the fore-ground figures, and the margin of the river: and a more accomplished master of light and shade than Michael Angelo, or Sebastian, would probably have availed himself of an opportunity so favourable for grouping the principal heads more into masses; for want of this, the parts are too *severally* seen, and the attention nowhere finds those agreeable points of repose (or benches of rest, within the paradise of art), which are the result of due subordination in the parts of a picture: and hence the gratifying advantages of *simultaneousness*, wherein the painter's art triumphs *over all others*, is in part lost to the spectator.

For the rest—we willingly join in the warm commendations which have been generally bestowed on this work; and, comparing it with the three portraits, of which we have treated in an earlier page, from the mellow pencil of del Piombo, we think some favourable allowances are called for, and should be made, with regard to its light, shade, and colour, on the score of the transference (mentioned above) which

the picture has undergone from wood to canvass. The fame of this work of Sebastian, has been too long, and is too firmly, established, for any modern critic to presume to deny that it is an extraordinary performance, for the early period of art at which it was produced; but we may, nevertheless, be permitted to indulge the belief, that there are more than one or two artists of the present day, and in England, who, after contemplating "the Resurrection of Lazarus," might, without the imputation of any overweening vanity, exclaim with Coreggio, "I also am a painter."

I have before had occasion slightly to notice, and I here again may, perhaps, be allowed—in fact, I feel myself called upon—to bestow a word or two, *pro bono publico*, upon the herd of catch-penny book-compilers—the literary apothecaries of a former page—who, with their obtrusive show-bottles, and the flashy audacities they contain, startle the eyes of unwary passengers, at nearly every corner, so that a pair of "preservers" are become almost indispensable to prudent persons.

These apothecaries found, by a singular inadvertency—or, perhaps, it may have been done out of a frolic to entrap them—they found, Jerusalem *prescribed* as the scene of Sebastian's picture, and have, accordingly, one and all, poured forth "Jerusalem."

"When I forget thee, oh Jerusalem! may my right hand forget her *cunning*."

Such an inadvertency—if it be inadvertency—is rare with Mr. Ottley: but in his Catalogue, he did chance—luckily or unluckily—to *write* "Jerusalem;" and, accordingly, Mr. Valpy's compiler, and the rest of the literary apothecaries, immediately pour forth

Jerusalem, notwithstanding the evangelist repeatedly names *Bethany* as the place of the demise and resuscitation of Lazarus, adding, that its distance from Jerusalem was about fifteen furlongs—or a trifle less than two miles; whereas the depicted buildings of Sebastian del Piombo, not being more than two hundred yards or so from the foreground, must be those of Bethany.

Nothing can show more clearly than *this*, the *manner* in which pretended “medicines for the mind” are dispensed, and in which deleterious draughts, under specious denominations, are mixed up with impunity in certain learned “Academies”—as printing-offices have recently been styled by one of these empirical pretenders. Had Peter Pindar lived in our days, he might have found, among his own fraternity, a better illustration of the mercenary principle of trade, in its sinister usurpations, than his Jew razor-vender; and a more eligible fabric for the handsome cloak which it finds it necessary to assume.

THE MARTYRDOM, OR ASSASSINATION, OF PETER
THE DOMINICAN.

GIORGIONE.

THE didactic power of the graphic and plastic arts, equivocally admitted by modern churchmen and poets, is acknowledged by philosophers; openly asserted by Sallust, by Bacon, by Johnson, and by Reynolds; and demonstrated by daily experience. No person of reflection can emerge from a picture gallery or a cathedral, or indeed pass a print-shop,

without being more or less sensible of the moral influence of Art, and without feeling that it was

“ Sent by some Spirit to mortals good.”

Much of the Fine Art of Italy has been worthlessly expended on unworthy subjects; and some of the very best art has been lavished on the most undeserving occasions. Yet we may not say that it has been prostituted, or utterly thrown away: because, what is now deemed error, or falsehood and folly, was once esteemed to be truth, rectitude, and wisdom. Before we absolutely condemn the erroneous creeds and mistaken zeal of former ages, we should probably reflect whether we also may not eventually prove mistaken on some points of which we are now fully confident. The glorious painting of Titian and Giorgione, will else in its moral effects have been worse than wasted, whilst it was employed in displaying the assassination and glorification of a furious zealot, who fell under a stroke of wild and irregular, but retributive, justice.

Martyrdom and *canonization* have been awarded to a remorseless wretch, whose mental and bodily energies—to use the expressive words of our late academician Northcote—were expended in “ blood-thirsty schemes of piety;” who, whilst living, was styled a “ *holy* inquisitor;” and at whose death winged cherubs, watchful of sublunary transactions, were religiously, or impiously, supposed to burst forth from celestial bliss, in order to conduct to heaven the blood-stained soul of Peter the—Dominican; to whom we had nearly applied a more exceptionable epithet; but shall content ourselves with expressing some surprise that the Roman suc-

cessors of the real St. Peter (the apostle) who was both saint and martyr, should ever have sanctioned this usurpation on the part of the followers of St. Dominic, both of his sanctity and martyrdom.

“The brief history (says Northcote) of St Peter Martyr, is this. He was *General* of the Dominicans —[The reader must pardon the phrase, and tolerate, if he can, the former existence of military churchmen.]—He was General of the Dominicans, and, of course, a most powerful person in the Holy Inquisition, and a violent *persecutor for the faith**, which made many inevitable enemies [as well it might, since all intelligent persons whom such faith had not hoodwinked, would of course become adverse to his cruel proceedings.] There was one family in particular, which he had treated with excessive cruelty; and their relations, who were officers in the army, were so enraged at Peter’s barbarity, that they resolved to revenge themselves on the tyrant, with the very first opportunity; and having been informed that he was to make a visit into some distant province, in pursuance of his blood-thirsty schemes of piety, they lay wait for him in a wood through which they knew he must pass, accompanied by one person only, a lay-brother of the convent. Accordingly, in this place, they attacked him, and cleft his scull with a sabre, leaving him dead on the spot.”

Titian’s highly celebrated picture of this subject, was painted in the year 1520, when he was forty

* In that age it was not known, and the knowledge is rarely acted upon in this—that persecution for *faith* (or *belief*) is as absurd as it is cruel; since belief is an involuntary sentiment, no more dependent on the will of the believing individual, than his complexion.

years of age ; and as Giorgione had long been dead, he had every means, every right, and every honourable inducement, to excel his master ; for his master in the true art of painting, Giorgione undoubtedly was, notwithstanding that the latter honourably reciprocated the epithet upon a certain trying occasion. " Let it be remembered (says his biographer) that it was not until he had seen the works of Giorgione, that Titian relinquished the tame and spiritless style which characterized his earlier productions, and became the founder [if he can be a founder who builds on the substruction of another] of a new school of art. But, Giorgione having been commissioned to paint that front of the Fondacio de Tedeschi, which is toward the Grand Canal of Venice ; Titian, by the interest of his friend Barberigo, was employed to paint on that other side of the same building which is toward the Merceria. In this work he painted a Judith so admirably, both as to design and colouring, that on its being presented to the public view, it was generally thought to be the work of Giorgione ; inso-much that one day some gentlemen of Venice meeting with him, and not knowing that any one but himself was engaged in the undertaking, gave him joy of his great success—unfortunately adding—particularly on the side toward the Merceria : and further, one of them told him that he had here outdone his performance on that side which was toward the great canal." My author proceeds to state, that " Giorgione, with shame and regret,"—but he should surely have added, with the redeeming integrity of a high and honourable mind,—" replied, that the Judith was not his, but—his *master's*."

As Titian adopted Giorgione's original and supe-

rior style of art, so has he in the treatment of this assassination, availed himself of all those pertinent thoughts of his senior, which he found relevant to the occasion and conducive to its pictorial effect; but has arranged his composition, and executed his design in a superior manner.

In both, the attack is made on the skirts of a forest. Peter has fallen under a stroke from the assassin; and in both, heaven opens, and the cherubic messengers of deity and bliss are poetically descending in a flood of glory, bearing the palm of martyrdom. In both productions, the artists, reverently obedient to the Dominicans and the Papacy, have aimed at exciting compassion for the cruel inquisitor who persecuted for the faith; and not at painting the consummation of a deed of retribution—or poetical justice, as we sometimes more dramatically say.

The chief differences between the two pictures are, that in Giorgione's the supine and well conceived figure of Peter, is imploring in vain, that mercy he denied to others; whereas in Titian's he is evidently stunned and expiring from his death stroke, which is more conformable to the recorded fact:—while at a distance, some of the party who had lain in wait, are pursuing his companion into the forest. Both the Dominicans are dressed in the black and white stole, or habit of their order, which Giorgione has cast into picturesque folds, and painted them well: the feet of his martyr are hidden by a break, or irregularity, of the ground; and his fore-ground assassin, who appears to be sufficiently determined, though somewhat straddling in his attitude, is habited

in the buff doublet, and slashed hosen, that were then commonly worn by cavaliers.

On the left hand, and in the back-ground, cattle and peasantry are busied at their field occupations. The latter seem quite unconcerned at the passing atrocity ; and must therefore be supposed to be either ignorant of the deed, or the painter must have meant to convey the inuendo, that they did not care to interfere between warriors and Dominicans.

On the other hand—the right—another of the outraged patrician family, having pursued the companion of Peter into the forest, has drawn his dagger, and seems about to dispatch him. The story, as it has reached our times, says that this Dominican escaped unhurt : but the painter has here represented him in the utmost peril. Still further within the umbrageous recess, a sumpter mule, or ass, belonging, we may suppose, to the assassins, is waiting the result of the rencontre.

Giorgione is here less rich in colour, and less facile in his handling, than in other of his works. In his trees, we readily trace the *rudiments* of those of Titian ; but his picture is dark ; and, like most of those of this early period, is deficient in reflexes. It is not, by any means, one of his best performances. Indeed, the extremities, both of the assassin and the saint, are so poorly drawn, that, but for the channel of its transmission, we should have been inclined to doubt its being a genuine Giorgione. There is a single head in the select collection of Gen. Phipps, which goes further toward informing us of the reach of Giorgione's merits, than this whole composition. But his "Peter Martyr" has not always been in such careful

keeping as of late years, and has in consequence been partially repainted; which, when known, accounts for its defects, without prejudice to the well-earned reputation of its original author. The heads, however, have something redeeming; more especially that of Peter, who looks like a hard-hearted inquisitor, remorseless, selfish, and suffering, which is precisely to the purpose. The little celestial messengers, too, have a Giorgionesque air. In justice to the powers of an artist so distinguished, and so efficient to the advancement of art, as Giorgione, we ought to wish that a fairer specimen of his talents were repositied in our National Gallery. It came, indeed, from the *Orleans* Collection: but England will seek, and will find, a higher reputation. And works that are not superior to the present, will gradually become obsolete, or be regarded but as pictorial curiosities.

As our national picture from the pencil of this master has suffered damage either from time or accident; as it has been worked upon in the way of reparation by other hands than his own; and as it does not therefore reach the average mark of Giorgione's merits, it seems the more incumbent upon us, in common liberality, to sketch here a few biographical lines of redeeming truth, concerning this original artist.

Giorgio Barbarelli—the tutor of Titian and of Sebastian del Piombo, and the real father of the Venetian school of painting—obtained the cognomen of *Giorgione*, from a certain grandeur conferred upon him by nature, no less of mind than of form, and which appears also impressed upon his productions; as the mental character of every man is, by some speculative philosophers, supposed to be on his hand

• writing. He certainly received the earlier rudiments of his professional knowledge in the drawing-school of the Bellini. But, modestly animated by the lofty consciousness of genius, he despised the minuteness which was then and there conventional, and substituted for it an original freedom, breadth, and even audacity, by which his works are distinguished. Of this style, he was, at Venice, the *inventor*—the first painter who among the Venetians, produced a striking effect when his performances were viewed at a due distance. Lanzi adds, that from the youthful period of his life, when he felt sufficiently assured to assume this boldness and originality, he continued to ennoble his manner, rendering the contours more round and ample, the fore shortenings more new, and the expression of the countenances, as well as the motions of his figures, more warm and lively. **His draperies** too, with all the other **accessories** of the Art, became more select, **his gradations** of colour more soft and **natural**, and, above all, his chiar-oscuro more powerful and effective. While Vasari pretends that for this latter acquirement Giorgione was indebted to da Vinci, Boschini justly maintains that he was in this respect his own master and scholar.

The pictures of Giorgione were for the most part executed in fresco upon the façades of the Venetian houses, where till lately there remained a few relics, as if to remind the inquiring traveller of what had perished. His style, as compared with that of Paul Veronese and other of his more variegated and florid followers of the Venetian school, is analogous to the music of our grand and simple national anthem of "God save the King," as compared with the complicated harmony of more recent productions. There

are but few notes, but they are varied and combined with the most consummate power.—Alas ! this highly distinguished artist died at the early age of thirty-four, in the year 1511 ; and, with the exceptions of Titian and Sebastian, his *productions*, rather than the pupils he educated, remained to instruct his countrymen and posterity in the true art of painting.

A MUSIC PARTY.

TITIANO VECELLIO.

WHEN Titian was young, and soon after he had sat down to Art, he imitated natural objects with great exactness, bestowing such delicate attention on the minutiae of his works, that he transcended, in this respect, even Albert Durer, whom he had at first chosen for his model. But when he saw the pictures of Giorgione, struck with their superior grandeur and simplicity, he at once quitted this elaborate style, and devoted himself to the attainment of that combination of breadth with suavity and rich colour, which distinguish the performances of this *original* painter, leaping toward his proper element, with the vigour and velocity of a spring which has been long held back. Lanzi says, that a few of the works which he produced, during this period of his life, are scarcely to be distinguished from those of Giorgione himself.

We apprehend the present Musical Party to be one of those few—probably painted not long after the regeneration of Titian's style. It has much the appearance of a fortuitous assemblage of concordant spirits ; and so little the air of being studied accord-

ing to preconceived rules of art, that little doubt need be entertained of its being merely a page of the artist's sketch book (assuming that he had one) transferred to canvass. Though it represents a concert, there is nothing in it *pre-concerted*. All is spontaneous, and done *at sight* (as the musical phrase is); even the chiar-oscuro seems accidental, and not a very fortunate accident, in as much as it attracts too large a portion of the spectator's regard, toward the somewhat heavy arm, and uninteresting white sleeve, of a young female singer, who appears waiting to chime in with her counter-tenour, and it allows too little of that regard to flow toward the mass of light, where the music book is introduced, with the singing boy and the upper part of a musical instrument. It would appear that the *sentiment* of the picture should *chiefly* reside in this part, where the attention of all the performers is concentrated, but which we find graced with only a secondary and subservient light.

It is by no means unlikely, that this more important part *was* honoured with the principal light, when the picture came from the easel of Titian; for it has since travelled a good deal; like our first Charles, to whom it once belonged, it has been subject to vicissitudes: to our regret, it has not been carefully preserved, and, doubtless, has partially lost its "original brightness," a warm glazing has apparently vanished from some of the faces. We but see it through the misty horizontal air of three intervening centuries, "shorn of its beams"—or of some of them, at least.

Five persons have here met together, to amuse themselves with music; or chance has thus brought them together.

One performs on the oboe, of which only the reed

is visible, (unless we mistake, the face of this oboe-player, was once of a lower tone—a warm glazing appears to have departed from it). Another musician, distinguished by his red velvet cap and white plume, plays on the violoncello, or bass viol. He seems to lead the concert, and to be worthy to lead it. There is music thrilling through the nerves of that left hand, which presses the strings of the instrument to the finger-board.

The other three are vocalists; or, to speak more critically, one—a boy—is singing, and the other two are waiting to take up their respective parts in the trio. Of these two, one is an elderly man, with rather an intelligent head, and a look of judiciousness; he is habited in a dark purple brown, wears a black cap, and is apparently the instructor of the boy. He keeps time; and his upheld hand—which seems in slow motion—expresses both sympathy, and his anxiety that his pupil should be exact. The boy's face is, perhaps, a portrait: it has rather a mean character.

The young woman listens intently, seems to have an excellent ear; and there is concord throughout, in more senses than one. There is, moreover, a pervading musical tone. In other words, the painter has most ably expressed that general interest and intentness, felt by performers, who are really skilled in the art, which keeps the whole in unison, and confers on his work, what the professor Barry was accustomed to term "totality."

From what accordance in the present combination of light, shade, form, and colour, this symphonious sentiment results—"speak ye who best can tell." There is generally fervency and feeling, with some-

times, a superadded touch of mysticism, in the remarks of Hazlitt on works of art. Of the present picture, he says, "It is all *ear*." This is pertinent and emphatic; what follows will, perhaps, be thought somewhat less so, though it still has pertinence: "The expression is evanescent as the sounds; the features are seen in a sort of dim chiar-oscuro, as if the confused impressions of another sense intervened—and you might easily suppose some of the performers to have been engaged the night before in

———"mask or midnight serenade,
Which the starv'd [*qu. starr'd*] lover to his mistress sings;
Best quitted with disdain."

It must appear but an equivocal compliment to a fine picture, when we cannot tell whether a certain effect, which we perceive in it, results from design, or damage; but we see not how to avert it, in the present case, without dissembling. If the dimness, and the pale faces, of the present work, proceed from the former, the penetration of our lost friend has discovered and declared the latent reason: but Hazlitt's veneration for the old masters, was somewhat superstitious, and exclusive; and we are, on the whole, led to question whether any thing so metaphysical, or recondite, would have occurred to him, had he been placed before a modern picture having the same peculiarity. But he who visits a picture gallery must bring with him the best part of the enjoyment—namely, his own good taste, or capacity for enjoying. It is else like going without an appetite to a splendid repast; or without an ear, to a concert.

BACCHUS AND ARIADNE.

TITIAN.

THE Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian was originally painted for Alphonso I. Duke of Ferrara, and has since graced the Villa Aldobrandini. Who imported it into England we do not know, but probably Lord Kinnaird, as we remember to have had the pleasure of seeing it in his lordship's gallery, many years ago. It has always been celebrated; and, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, came with resounding grace upon the European world, like the first rapturous poem of Pindar upon the listening heroes at Olympia. It is, in fact, a painted Lyric Ode, the nature of which we have endeavoured to develope in our account of Rubens's depicted allegory. The story, which the learning and genius of the great Venetian artist, the patriarch of this species of painting, has turned to this rapturous account, is well known to classic literature. Briefly—The Athenian hero, Theseus, after having espoused a Cretan princess, who had extricated him from a labyrinth of dangers—abandoned her, not far from the sea-shore, on the ~~island of Naxos~~, leaving her asleep. The critical point of time—here chosen with great felicity on the part of the artist—is where the sub-deity Bacchus, with his revellers, forth-issuing from the skirts of a forest, awaken Ariadne with the sounds of their cymbals and tambourines; and the god of wine,—smitten with her charms, and while she is in the act of recognising his divinity—leaps from his car in a transport of amorous passion.

A finer subject for a Lyric Ode, whether of "silent poesy" or "speaking picture," can scarcely be imagined; and Titian has here triumphantly blended classical learning with the poetry of his Art; a tone of rapturous enthusiasm seeming to resound throughout the admirable performance; acting the welcome part of a middle term in logic, and melting its manifold energies into a magnificent whole.

Educated under competent tutors at the Castle of Cadoré, the painter may or may not have been "far seen in Greek." This has been controverted: But he was obviously far enough seen in that antique lore of which Greek is the vehicle, to have read in Plutarch, that "the images of Bacchus and his followers were still to be seen among the constellations," and has availed himself of this scientific and picturesque circumstance and occasion, in moulding his matter, so as to introduce, with interesting effect, several learned allusions, at which we shall presently arrive. It may happen—of such contingencies we must take our chance—that to some readers we may appear over recondite—yet we shall mention that Titian was probably not unacquainted with the circumstance that Bacchus himself was in fact no other than the prototype of the constellated husbandman of the sphere (since called Bootes and Arctophylax)—the first cultivator of the vine, and probably a derivation from the patriarch Noah.—Here let us pause—

Among the pregnant evils of parodies and travesties (which else were no great evils in themselves), may be reckoned that they inevitably mar the purer trains of ideas appertaining to the serious matter that is thus made the subject of burlesque, and in spite of our vexed endeavours to avoid them, they sometimes

obtrude themselves on our recollective faculties, and usurp, or contaminate, attention. Anxious to possess ourselves of every accessible source of critical information, concerning a work so celebrated as the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, and seduced by false semblances, partial and empirical announcements, and the respect we had innocently attached to the name of Mr. Allan Cunningham, a certain *promising* publication entitled "The Cabinet Gallery of Pictures," of which the periodicals say such handsome things, chanced to make its appearance within the round of our inquiries, with an obtrusiveness which we ought to have distrusted. Alas! we found there, nothing but a vulgar travestie printed in that gentleman's name, of which we are now not only unable to divest ourselves, but it has even in part changed our purpose—or rather compelled us to combine with our original purpose, that of guarding the public, if not shielding the painter, against its gross misrepresentations, and the false lights which it hangs out. Shielding the painter! have we written? Surely (our friends will say) such painters as Titian—so long since sainted—may be regarded as safe and unassailable in their respective spheres.—Yes; but may they not be blasphemed there?

We shall do our best, however, to adhere to the advertisement of our title-page, and be as critical, as descriptive, and as explanatory, as we are able, while we seek to separate, or disentangle, the classic legend and the painted ode, from the vulgar travestie. So that our original *purpose* is in fact *not* changed, but only our mode of accomplishment.

We warm as we approach the pages of our *sagacious* contemporary, notwithstanding his *moonlight*;

but, with what sentiment? Pshaw! If the reader should not presently feel it, there will be no occasion to declare it: if he should, there will be still less. How this critic came to entertain for a moment the singular—the purblind—fancy, that he saw a *moon-light* in this floridly coloured picture from the pencil of Titian—nearly the *most* florid of colourists—among its occult mysteries, is most mysterious! Really this is a most extraordinary revelation, on the part of one who permits himself to be publicly announced as a critical dissertator on, and describer of, pictures. But so it is.

Our contemporary proceeds to inform us, that Bacchus and his train of jocund followers, ere they encountered the solitary and deserted daughter of the Cretan king, had been merely excursing for the *double purpose of hunting and drinking!* His words in this place are, “The composition is in conception nearly *blameless*,” and then he proceeds to blame it in the following *refined* language: “Bacchus, during an *excursion* for the double purpose, it would appear, of hunting *and* drinking, arrives at the wild sea-shore, with *woods at hand*, and temples in the distance, and with light enough from the *STARS and MOON*, to observe, not only the loveliness of the scene, but also the beauty of Ariadne, who, on hearing *of* the approach of Bacchus and his revellers, announced as it was by cymbal and tambourine, and probably song, throws down her mantle [which she has not thrown down] and *pitcher*, and *flies*, plucking *higher* a part of her *lower* dress as she *runs*, and showing a shapely leg.”

There is a great deal more of *this sort* of non-description, which the reader who pleases may easily

analyse, or may judge of the value for himself, after this our *assay* from the best end of the ingot, wherein Theseus is presumed to have left an empty pitcher with the deserted princess of Crete; and Bacchus to have gone forth from God knows where, for "the double purpose"—if this be sound sense or grammar (but most reflecting authors, if we mistake not, would have been withheld here by reflecting on the incompatibility of the *two* purposes) "of *hunting*, and *drinking*." That modern fox-hunters contrive to accomplish both, is readily granted; but still, while the purposes are two, the woods are the scene of only one. These purposes cannot be united. But none of the figures introduced into Titian's masterly composition, have either bow, arrow, javelin, or other weapon, or *indication* even, of *hunting*. Who would go hunting, with old lazy-paced Silenus on his ass? And in his train an Indian juggler, gymnosophist, or Ophiucus, entwined with serpents?—The Ophiucus is in fact an aged but vigorous Faun, and Titian has accordingly furnished him with a pair of budding horns, authorized, both by the Etruscan pottery and the Greek relievos.

The critical reader will not fail to note here, that Titian, by the pertinent introduction of this serpent-twined figure, shows that he *had* received a learned education, which his critic, with these facts staring him in the face, and even while in the very act of commenting thereon, has chosen to doubt—nay, has virtually denied, for our contemporary expressly writes of this distinguished artist, that "his imaginary scholarship is ill supported." Titian shows, in his Bacchus and Ariadne, beyond the denial of words, that he had been scientifically educated, as his foreign biographers have recorded; but what

does Mr. Cunningham show by asserting as above, while he *omits all mention* of this learned and mystic touch, and of one of the *principal* figures of the composition which he undertook to criticise?

The erudite artist hereby imparts to those who are able and willing to read his Lyric Odes, that this mythological incident, which he has converted into a master-piece of art, occurred after the return of Bacchus from his Indian expedition. The sylvan personage in question had been one of his Oriental companions, and had learned on the banks of the Ganges, the tricks which the Indian jugglers exhibit by means of tame serpents; and hence, was subsequently translated to the skies with Bacchus himself and Ariadne's crown, and became the asterism now called "the Serpentinebearer," and by Milton, "Ophiucus huge." It shines on the modern planispheres and in the starry heavens, a little to the northward of the ecliptic, and with one foot resting on Scorpio.

To return—Hunting, which Mr. C.—the esoteric Mr. C.—has divined to be the object of Titian's revellers, is entirely out of the question. Bacchus and his party have evidently been *sacrificing*, and fall in with Ariadne as they are issuing from the skirts of the sacred grove. An old Faun, or Satyr, his head bound with ivy, brandishes aloft a limb of the sacrificed victim, and a wine*-eyed infant Satyr, as he dances gaily along, drags its head—beautifully painted—and that of a calf. This jocund little fellow, full of hilarity, is one of the finest passages of the pictured ode: his hair is tastily decked with flowrets, and a purple drapery loosely floats from his shoulders. Meanwhile an attendant Bacchante, or

* Anacreon has "warm-ey'd," which seems sufficient precedent here; but let the picture be referred to.

Priestess, who seems to have rambled from the canvas of Poussin, and whom in point of beauty we should prefer to Ariadne herself, strikes her tambourine, and another clashes her silver cymbals with Arcadian grace. Surely these are pretty plain, and should have been, to a poet, one would think, *sufficient* indications of the nature of the ceremony which the party have been performing, and the *purpose* of their excursion. The satyrical sacrifice of a calf was before him, and the critic not seeing it, has felt not the least alarm.

Again; the best poets have been blind, to be sure: let Allan find consolation here. But how could a poet with eyes in his head, for a moment fancy this to be a *night-piece*! Good heavens! when the colour and form of every object introduced, is distinctly, and even splendidly, specified: when the foliage of the vines and forest-trees, in the middle-ground, is detailed as seen through the clearest day-light; when our contemporary himself treats of the far-off temples, as if they were architecturally visible: when the spectator sees far into the forest, and discovers there such minute matters as a bugle blown by a Satyr, and another Satyr (characteristically) following Silenus, with a skin, or antique bottle, of his nectarious beverage: when the near-ground flowers are specified—among them the iris and colombine—with almost botanic accuracy.—When the whole picture, in short, is coloured in Titian's most* florid style, with a pro-

* In other parts of his critical dissertation, Mr. C. remembering or forgetting his nocturnal reflections, writes, "The *lustrous* colouring of the picture has never been questioned by either artists or critics. The gay character of the subject accords with the *voluptuous outlay* of colour: yet nothing can be more natural, and we have heard accomplished painters add scien-

fusion of vivid greens, rich reds, and golden browns ; while the drapery of Bacchus himself is a splendid crimson, that of the cymbal-nymph is of "flame-coloured taffeta," and both are super-abounding in minute details.

Oh ! but (says the critical dissertator), in determining between *night* and *day*-pieces, I don't judge by colours and distinctness of forms. Such things may be for vulgar eyes ; and if there is no *moon*, there are *STARS* in Titian's sky.—Tut ! there are no stars. It is a mere *ignis fatuus*, or friar's lantern, to lead boors astray. Had star-light been intended, would the stars introduced have been sedulously restricted to the single constellation called Ariadne's crown ?

Here is *the cardinal point*. It is a luminous and masterly poetic indication, or learned allusion, boldly introduced by pictorial license on the part of Titian, toward which Mr. Cunningham has shown himself,—stone-blind. Titian faintly placed this asterism over the head of Ariadne, in order to indicate the deific power of Bacchus, and that the daughter of Minos is acting under celestial influence, which may perhaps account for the peculiarities of her attitude, look, and action, more satisfactorily than our contemporary's common-place remark (addressed to all servant-maids whom it may concern, and perhaps intended for wit), that "the artist has put no more life and mettle into her heels than a young woman would wish for in running away from a handsome god."

tific, than the way in which the artist has employed his *glowing*, his *warm*, and his cold colours." It would be entertaining to hear how a man who has proved that he does not know *moon*-light from *day*-light, would distinguish between *glowing* colours and *warm* colours.

And of this astronomical allusion and poetic license, Titian has availed himself upon the same principle that his contemporaries have introduced haloes or circlets of supernal light around the heads of their holy personages; the Venetian, not dreaming that any poet and critical dissertator of the nineteenth century, would construe this classic indication—this painter's by-play—into the illuminating cause which imparted rich colouring to the figures, groves, and draperies, of which this celebrated performance consists. Really this is not very luminous on the part of the British poet, and should (as we think) have helped to satisfy him that Titian really *had* a learned education, of which he has chosen to advance his doubts; and that if he was “not far seen in Greek,” he knew at least something of the loftier and more recondite sciences.

Beside—Every other poet is pretty well informed that Theseus deserted Ariadne in the *morning*—leaving her asleep,—and that Bacchus, with his train of fauns and satyrs, passing that way, soon afterward, the hero and heroine of the piece, Bacchus and Ariadne, were mutually smitten with each other's charms: a reciprocity which the soundest critics have thought was admirably expressed in Titian's picture. Whether or not the whole be an astronomical allegory, which old writers, as Lord Verulam opines, have converted into a terrestrial and legendary fact, it does not appear from fabulous history, or from Titian's version of the story, that Ariadne either run, or affected to run, as from a rampant ravisher, as Mr. Cunningham *delicately* reports; or that Bacchus leaps from his car with more than the ardour of kindling affection.

Unless we are much mistaken, the more tasteful

and learned in Art, profoundly respect the stellated crown which appears immediately over the head of Ariadne, as an erudite and Miltonesque touch from the pencil of Titian, that is quite *electrical*; and pity it is that our contemporary can now only feel its reactive shock; for he has not listened to Friar Bacon's head whilst it remained oracular. The stars were introduced (on the part of the painter) with the utmost local and chronological propriety, in representing an event which happened in an age when men were emerging from their earlier Sabæanism into the light of the Homeric mythology, and still retained much of their ancient astrologic faith. The exhibition of this phenomenon is alone sufficient to consecrate Titian as a learned, erudite, and poetic painter. It is a crown of admiration and immortality for the artist himself!

And it is all the better, when regarded as a subordinate portion of a painted Lyric Ode:—a poetic effusion fervently thrown off in a tumult of Pindaric transport—It is all the better, for suggesting at least two trains of sentiment to the reflective critic:—to wit—Either that deific power, regardful of heroic personages, and watchful of terrestrial concerns, has just formed the constellation; or, with more prosaic probability, that Ariadne has been awakened so early, that Aurora, or the rising radiance of the sun, has not yet extinguished the meridional light of the stars of the *Corona Borealis* (another name for Ariadne's crown), which shine with supernatural lustre in honour of the occasion, and to crown the triumph of the god of wine.

There is something of tragi-comedy in the whole of this affair, as it respects Titian, Mr. Allan Cunningham, and the public. It seems a subject, too,

that might provoke an epigram, which should turn upon the ideas, that the critic is *so far behind* the artist in antiquarian lore; and there is so much of Scotch *mist* between them, that he *can't see him*, and therefore takes a conscientious oath, on Mr. Major's books, that to the best of *his* knowledge and belief, Titian is not there.

We have little to add: having unavoidably incorporated most of our own observations on the details of this gorgeous picture, with our exposure of the mistakes of our contemporary. The head of Bacchus is richly entwined with the leaves and fruit of the vine; but its character is not Grecian, nor so elevated as might be wished: neither is that of the countenance of Ariadne: and their draperies, as well as that of the Cymbal-nymph, are perhaps somewhat too much subdivided into littlenesses. The landscape is admirable! and tenfold the more admirable for being *unprecedented* in its style, as well as execution.—But of this we must delay to treat. The reader shall hear of it again in a future page. Meanwhile the vines, climbing the forest elms and sycamores, impart an aboriginal air to the scene, that is in perfect accordance with the poetry of the subject, and are painted with the same charming pencil, and the same faithful attention to nature, which we have already found so much reason to commend in the weeds and flowers of the fore-ground.

The sounds of the cymbals, tambourine, and bugle, with what is evidently following in procession—for the frame shuts out, Heaven knows how many jovial bacchanals, and pipes and tabors—these, in addition to the interjectional accompaniments which strike on Fancy's ear—altogether, the obstreperous din must have amounted to a great deal of “harmony not

understood," and we cannot be surprised that it has abruptly awakened poor Ariadne, or that she seems a little out of sorts. Distracted between the discovery that she was deserted by her Athenian lover, and the sudden presence of a deity; the painter who had represented otherwise would have been justly liable to reprehension.

The splendid and bold contrasts of colour which we here behold—homogeneous as they are with the sort of wild abandonment and ebriety of the pencil, in the rendering of the chiar-oscuro;—the "wanton heed and giddy cunning" of the artist, cannot easily escape notice, or fail to obtain praise. Who feels not that the sobriety of Gaspar, Claude, or Swaneveldt, would have been less well suited to the hilarious occasion? If he who contemplates this admirable work, does not perceive that its abrupt grandeur, and energy of composition, and its rich and rapturous tones, homogeneous with its masterly style of design, warrant the epithet which we set out with claiming for it from the current language of the Sister Art, we should in vain endeavour to prove its applicability. If his heart is not warmed, as Titian's must have been warmed—(perhaps by reading the poetry of Anacreon in its original language)—

" ~~When~~,—~~master~~ of the pencil's fire,
He listen'd to the Muse's lyre,

we should never be able to satisfy him that the present is not less a triumph of the *painter's Art*, than of the deity of wine.

Nicolo Poussin, about half a century afterwards, advanced further within the penetralium of these antique Bacchic mysteries, but Titian was honoured

with the *first* glance. That his literary and scientific education within the castle and libraries of Cadoré, combined with the comparatively slender opportunities which he had of studying the basso-relievos of the Greeks, brought him so far acquainted with the nature and peculiar character of the Bacchanalian orgies, and Arcadian sylvan solemnities, as to enable him to conceive and compose the present picture, is proved by the picture itself. But Titian could ill bear to stand within the radiance of contemporaneous glory, as is known by his conduct towards Tintoret. The rising suns of Art, flung their radiance too horizontally, and too directly on his organs of vision: but the light of antiquity, shining from above, illumined his path without annoying or dazzling his eyesight, and in that path he trode with the firm, manly, steady, and conquering advancement of a Roman legion. Of this also, his Bacchus and Ariadne is proof sufficient.

INCIPIENCY OF LANDSCAPE PAINTING.

To the successful and surprising accomplishment which we have with so much pleasure witnessed and endeavoured to develope in the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, as an historical or poetic picture, we may add, that it marks an era—an advent rather—in another branch of Art: being the *oldest* picture in the National Gallery; or with which we have acquaintance, wherein the true principles of *Landscape*-painting are duly recognised: and when we perceive and reflect, that it is not less *beautiful* and *grand* in style and execution, than it is *true* to Nature, *and* was *new* in Art, it really approaches to *inspiration*! When has an *uninspired* artist, without *exemplars*

before him, produced any work even distantly approaching the landscape-passages of Titian's Bacchus and Ariadne, or his St. Peter Martyr? which doubtless led the way to the landscape-painting of Domichino, Poussin, Rubens, and the Caraccii; of which we shall proceed to treat.

In all Arts, the perception of Truth—I mean here the truth of external Nature (speaking in the aggregate), though probably I need not thus restrict my observation—appears to have been of gradual acquirement. Men *learn*, like children, to see things as they really are; and this extends to professors of Art and their manual practice, or that which we so term; but which is in fact as much an affair of the eye as of the hand.

When Imitative Art dawns upon any country, the practitioner—even he who begins upon a wrong principle, exercises a certain power of carrying other minds along with his own, by sympathy and by example. There is manifestation of mental energy in such production, which is always influential: for whether the producer be a potter's daughter of Corinth, or a native artist of Mexico, or New Zealand, or any other land, with such manifestations men always sympathise. Is it not the same in the philosophy of morals? Men sympathise with courage and strength, calling them heroism, long before the milder virtues are recognised.—But at present, we have only to do with the energies of Imitative Art—

We repeat, this is the case, even where the artist begins ever so wrong, or wide of the truth: much more is it the case when he begins nearer to what is right. His mode, be it what it may, of seeing Nature, extends itself to his neighbouring circle of observers, who soon become admirers. Hence, the *widely spread*

out delineations of tatooed faces, which we have seen from the pencils of New Zealand artists ; and hence the attenuated, meagre, and miserable-looking, saints and angels, delineated when Graphic Art first emerged from the barbarism of the dark ages, and before the resurrection of the Antique—by the earliest professors of Italy and Germany, of which some specimens are still extant in those countries, and a few have been imported into our own.—And hence the ignorant wonder with which both were beheld.

The reappearance of ancient sculpture, effected a sudden, and a sort of miraculous, revolution :—It might be termed a *revelation*—in the art—or rather *mystery*, of perceiving the truths of external Nature as regards the human form. The hood-winks were thus removed, and—whilst the physical, as well as mental, perceptions of the multitude concerning beauty, were infinitely raised and improved—such hawks and falcons as Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Titian, saw at once their quarry ; and soared, or pounced, and triumphed, accordingly.

But it was somewhat otherwise with the Landscape-painters' branch of the Art. The ancients themselves, even of the best ages of Art, appear never to have attained to more than a very crude and imperfect perception of those truths of inanimate Nature, which it is the object of landscape-painting to disclose and exhibit. The painted contents of the grottoes, or *souterrains*, of Italy, including those of Herculaneum and Pompeii, and wherever else in the Roman territory remains of this sort have emerged to light, show that the artists of the classic ages had no ascertained principles of perspective, and no notion of what is now termed *the picturesque*, in landscape scenery ; and

that Zeuxis, Apelles, Protogenes, Parrhasius, and the other great painters of antiquity, regarded the landscape passages of their pictures, but as auxiliary matters, necessary perhaps, or at least desirable, where an out-of-door occurrence was to be represented; yet not absolutely so, and indeed no otherwise necessary or attractive, than to *excite the idea* of a rock, house, tree, bank, or whatever else appertained to the depicted story, in the way of suggestion, sign, or indication; and not in the way of *perspective representation* to the optic sense.

That this was also the state of landscape-painting, on the revival of Art in Italy, is sufficiently obvious, from the earliest historical and legendary works which were there produced; where indications merely—conventional indications, and suggestions—of such landscape passages as were necessary or indispensable to the pictorial relation of a Scripture history or a mythological legend, were sparingly introduced, as matters that could not be entirely suppressed or omitted, without making the history-pieces seem like transactions in dark holes; as indeed they too frequently did, notwithstanding.

The early works, so sedulously sought for, and so carefully enumerated by Lanzi, sufficiently attest that landscape-painting was merely an auxiliary, whose services were faintly recognised, down to the time of Masaccio and the Peruginos; nay, even down to the era of Raphael, a few tussocks of sedge, with a patch of raw green, served for all the varieties of verdure; a few twigs and sprigs represented all the diversities of forest trees; and though buildings were a little better defined, clouds and seas were quaintly curled, with little or no reference to their natural

forms. The same was done by Michael Wolgemuth and his predecessors in Germany, down to the time of Albert Durer, Paul Brill, and Lucas of Leyden ; from whose grotesque conceits and crudities, *Giorgione* and *Titian* made that sudden spring, and took those lofty flights, which have since been the surprise of Europe. The very sound of their wings awakened its slumbering taste.

The consequences that rapidly succeeded, are really wonderful ! and to be regarded as an important **occurrence** in the philosophy of Art, and a sort of advent in the history of painting. Our academician, Constable, in a lecture publicly delivered at the Hampstead assembly-rooms, has been the first man in England, duly to notice this new revelation, and its immediate and important philosophical effects. It certainly should, and as certainly would, have been noticed sooner, had our imperfectly constituted London Academy provided a chair for a *Professor of Landscape*—a desideratum which was publicly pointed out in the lecture-room of the Royal Institution thirty years ago : but “ my people *will* not know, Israel will *not* remember.”

Early in the sixteenth century, it seemed as if these great minds—soon after followed by those of Dominichino, Rubens, and the Caraccii—while each trowed for itself, had mutually hailed each other in the enthusiastic spirit in which Pope apostrophized his supposed friend Bolingbroke—as if, in a moment of transport, Giorgione had sounded forth,

“ Awake !” my Titian—“ leave all meaner things
To low ambition, and the pride of kings :
Let us”—expatiate free—

And as if these stirring sounds, echoed in more Miltonic phrase and more mellifluous blandishment, had soon reached the ears of Poussin, and incited him to perceive yet more distinctly, that without landscape, history-painting was but like the solitary Adam; and to invoke the living principles of landscape, in the language of Paradise :

——“Awake

My fairest, my *espoused*, my *latest found* ;
 Heaven's last, best gift ; my ever new delight !
 Awake ! the *morning shines*, and the *fresh field*
 Calls us ; we lose the prime ; to mark *how* spring
 Our tender plants ; *how* blows the citron grove ;
 How *Nature paints her colours* ; how the bee
 Sits on the bloom—extracting liquid sweets.”

LANDSCAPE, WITH ST. GEORGE AND THE DRAGON.

DOMINICHINO.

LOFTY trees, which are very carefully, and very ably, painted, considering the early period of their production, adorn the fore-ground ; a road passes between them toward a fortified metropolis : the reach of an ample river, a tract of champaign country, and a lake, embellish the distant landscape, while the prospect is bounded by mountains. The city is defended by projecting bastions, and is adorned with temples, towers, and other superb buildings, among which appears—somewhat prematurely, when the legend to which all this has reference, is referred to—the spire of a Christian church.

The story, with the exception of a few local and

minor circumstances, is tolerably well told. The dragon is dark, winged, coiled, and placed in the centre of the fore-ground ; the principal light falls on the terrified princess, who, attired in her royal and bridal habiliments, and distracted by extreme danger, is flying from his fatal clutch : the dragon's pursuit of this beautiful victim is arrested by the Arian champion, who is tilting at him from a pie-bald charger, armed at all points, in full career, and with spear in rest. The second light, falls on the white parts of the horse, and gleams on the plate armour of the valourous knight. A gloomy sentiment pervades the scene. The whole is of a deep and solemn tone, suited to the immolation of a princess.

This picture is more elaborately and more tastefully pencilled, than are some other of this painter's works ; and the landscape passages, than any painter's works of this early period, save and except Titian ; for Poussin was now but dawning. The nearer trees, indeed, are so ably *generalised*, yet their branching, ramifications, and foliage, are so skilfully detailed, and discover so much accurate observation, that they powerfully remind us of those in the St. Peter Martyr of Titian, which are so justly celebrated.

These are not portraits of individual trees ; neither are they, although somewhat diversified from each other, specifically, either acacias, oaks, ashes, pines, or elms, or of any other well known forest trees, either of Africa, which is the proper scene of the story, or of any other clime [no date palms are among them], which shows that the Italian landscape painters from the first, set to work scholastically, and sought for the genus rather than the species, or the individual, when trees were to be introduced into their

compositions. In the present instance, the sentiment of overshadowing loftiness is successfully imparted. But for the warm interest which the reader will naturally take in the combat that is proceeding, and in the rescue of a lovely princess, he would be sensible here of an umbrageous coolness and shelter, or at least, he would perceive that such coolness and shelter were *ably* suggested.

Dr. Johnson and Mr. Payne Knight have (in substance) both remarked, that we never mistake pictures for realities. Deceptive resemblance, real or pretended, is a merely vulgar mode of estimating the merits of paintings, which, unless they be of the lowest order, address themselves not *to* the sense, but *through* the sense of vision, to the imagination and intellect. We love pictures—not because we mistake them for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. As we gaze at the finest painted landscapes, we never entertain the least notion that we are wandering among real groves, or admiring real fountains, but are most agreeably charmed into the reflection of how we should feel, were such groves as we see depicted, waving above our heads; or such fountains bubbling up, or such rivulets flowing, beside us. We have here paused a moment among Dominichino's trees, as among those from the pencil of Titian, wishing to assist the critical reader in noting the germination and gradual growth of the landscape-painter's branch of art: and shall now proceed with what appertains to our Princess, Knight, and Dragon.

Mr. Ottley is so frequently—so generally—right in his pictorial remarks, that he can far better afford than some other critical dissertators, to be sometimes mistaken. He writes of the present landscape, that

it "assuredly does not represent a spot where we should expect to meet the enormous Dragon, which the painter has been pleased to represent on the fore-ground, with St. George, on a heavy charger, his lance in the rest, tilting at him, and a Princess running away frightened; for there is no deep recess, no cavern, no indication even of a rock, where the poor monster may be supposed to have a hiding-place, to which, like others of his kind, he may retire in case of any threatened discomfiture."

This is losing sight of the legend, and of the true object of sympathy; and I know not why we should wish the naughty, wicked Dragon, to have possessed so much generalship. If we rightly remember—but it is long since we read Dunlop's History of Fiction, or the Seven Champions of Christendom—this dragon of dragons—the great and dreadful prototype of him of Wantley, and of all other ferocious and virgin-devouring dragons—was no sculker, and needed no hiding-den. He looked round on a wide domain of desolation, the result of his own savage, and hitherto uncontrollable, voracity; and having long been pampered with a damsel for dinner every day (till the lot had remorselessly fallen on the king's daughter), had become confirmed in his despotic power and possessions: his usurpations had been submitted to, and acknowledged as rights: a compact had been made with him: such a monster—like other nuisances that are sufficiently powerful, may boldly stalk abroad, and inhabit even gardens and pleasure-grounds. In the emphatic and strictly applicable words of our poet, this dreaded and invincible dragon

"Was monarch of all he survey'd,
His right there was none to *dispute*."

For all former disputants had fallen before his pestiferous breath, till, at length, he met his match in the thrice valiant and renowned St. George—the champion of Arius and distressed princesses, and prime pattern of chivalry to future generations: who, if he did not shoot with a long bow, employed, on this terrible occasion, a very long spear, as Dominichino wisely opined, and as our readers may see.

Conformably to this alarming state of things, the roads and groves are here represented as being depopulated. No other human figures than those of the saint and the royal and devoted virgin, are present, near the fore-ground; and none are discoverable at a distance—excepting a few, who have assembled on the city walls, to witness the impending catastrophe; and who, with held up and outstretched arms, are expressing their wonder at the champion's courage and enterprise.

In the above passage concerning the combat, we have been so far from employing the word *dispute* in a metaphorical, or tropical, sense, that we have, in fact, put aside for the moment, that military trope of the crusading ages, which has clothed and set forth a virulent polemic dispute, as a perilous adventure, and have substituted the *literal meaning*; for the legend of St. George victorious over the Dragon, when divested of its chivalric and romantic hues, is, in plain truth, nothing more than a triumphant way of displaying the issue of a celebrated religious quarrel, which took place during the earlier ages of Christianity, between the Arian and Athanasian factions. It has been allegorically represented as a romantic and picturesque adventure; but it was in itself, simply a violent polemic quarrel for supremacy,

in which the church militant, *Bishop George* of Alexandria—the enterprising son of a Cappadocian fuller—the rapacious monopolizer of salt, and bacon, and oppressor of the poor—is reported by his own partisans to have been victorious. Strange! and passing strange! that this cruel perpetrator of fraud and injustice, should have become the renowned champion *St. George!* the patron of England, Portugal, certain parts of Russia, and Modern Greece! In short, the highly honoured exemplar of Christian knight-hood, throughout Europe!

The hard and enduring heart of this canonised dragon-killer, is repositied in the collegiate chapel, which bears his name, at Windsor, having been received by King Henry V. as an inestimable present, or “grete and precyous relyke,” from the Emperor Sigismond of Germany. All this might well excite our wonder, had it not been the same with other human delusions, which, in the simple and sublime phrase of Eschylus,

—————“A day in darkness hides:
A day to light restores.”

The Athanasian heresy, was the dragon which *St. George* ostensibly vanquished. It had, doubtless, at the time, made considerable progress. Many had become converts to its doctrines; or, in the language of its opponents—had been devoured by the dragon. A princess was on the dangerous eve of proselytism, when the valorous polemic, armed cap-a-pie with Arian truths, boldly rode forward, joined issue, and overcame the heretical dragon, despite of his sophistries, or pestiferous breath. And as the pagan oracles had been, by the Christians, admitted and proclaimed

to have been inspired by "satanic agency," it was not difficult to identify the Athanasian heresy with the scriptural dragon; or to fable the rest of the legend, and set it forth in chivalry's romantic forms and colours.

Since writing the above, we have perused the old black-letter legend of St. George and the Dragon, as rendered into English, and printed by that prime hero of the British press, Master Wynkin de Worde; from which we shall extract what is essential to the correct understanding of our National Gallery pictures of this romantic subject, either in treating of the St. George and the Dragon by Tintoret, or of the *Sequel* of the story, as more poetically rendered by Rubens. Dominichino had evidently seen, and studied from, this old legend. With the exception of the misplaced, or rather antedated, Christian church, the topography of his picture seems entirely regulated by it. We have here the city of Selene; the Libyan lake; and the distant Athanasian monastery, much as the legend leads us to conceive of them, with perhaps the Abyssinian "Mountains of the Moon," [Selene being literally the City of the Moon] which Bruce so long afterward explored,—in the extreme distance; all ably painted and justly conceived, with the exception of the Christian church, which the painter has mistakenly placed within the walls of the pagan city, before it was converted.

Dominichino's princess, beautiful in her person, is coronetted, arrayed in her bridal robes, and in her look and action is obviously, and sufficiently, under the influence of terror: but in one of the principal objects, the powers of the painter's fancy have failed

him. His dragon is too much of a theatrical, or puppet-show, dragon, to inspire terror in a degree at all commensurate to the devouring of two victims *per diem*, and other dreadful effects, which have been ascribed to this redoubtable dragon.—Our painter has very obviously forgotten, that it required four yoke of oxen to drag away his dead carcase. The main-spring of action of his depicted tragedy, is, therefore, deficient in energy. But the aerial tones of the distant landscape, and the forms and the gloom of the fore-ground trees, are much to be praised; more particularly the lofty one which constitutes the right hand side-screen.

This picture came to the National Gallery with the Carr collection.

SAINT GEORGE COMBATING THE DRAGON.

TINTORETTO.

TINTORETTO is seen to some disadvantage in our National Gallery, as compared with his avowed prototype and master, Titian; inasmuch as we possess a carefully finished and thoroughly studied picture of the latter, and only a sort of pictorial rhapsody, hastily produced and never revised, from the pencil of Tintoretto, not one of the works on which his fame was founded.

Giacopo Robusti did not obtain the cognomen of *Tintoretto*, as some may suppose, from the splendours of his palette, but—from the circumstance of his father being a dyer—it was conferred on him at first as a juvenile joke; and in his riper years, he obtained the further addition of “*Il Furioso Tintoretto*,” con-

ferred on him from the extraordinary fervour, and surprising rapidity of his talent.

His father must have been a man of no inconsiderable mental discernment, since he not only saw the signs of incipient genius in the youthful Giacompo, but after the son had made a certain rudimental progress, he acquired, and employed, the means of placing him under the master of all others in Europe, or in the world, the most competent to his efficient instruction: but, alas! if biographers may be believed, the great, the honoured, the opulent, the accomplished, Titian, after ten days only of discipleship, became so jealous of the extraordinary advancement of his pupil, that he sought and found occasion to exclude him from his studio, and dismiss him from his house. We listen reluctantly to the relation of this fact, but it seems to be so well attested, that it is difficult to ascribe it to any other than an illiberal motive; unless, in charity to the great Venetian, a suspicion may be indulged that young Robusti, was somewhat "robustious." We know he was dauntless; perhaps he was also assuming, and illiterate, when the stock of his knowledge is compared with the very superior acquirements of Titian. Tintoretto is known to have had sufficient ingenuity, and sufficient self-confidence, to construe forbiddal, into emancipation, and soon ventured to inscribe, on the wall of his own studio, either in the way of motto, or stimulus, or bravado, or announcement of his own aspirations—"the design of Michael Angelo with the colour of Titian;" and assiduously applied himself to the accomplishment of this coalition, by copying and imitating the pictures of the great colourist, as long as the daylight lasted, and afterward drawing

by lamplight from the sculpture and models of Michael Angelo. We shall only add here, that connoisseurs who have visited Venice, and seen his "Miracle of the Slave," at the College of St. Mark; his "Lord's Supper," at the Salute; and his "Crucifixion," at the College of St. Rocco, speak of Tintoretto as a far more worthy and efficient rival of his master, than his present picture of the Libyan Princess rescued from the jaws of the Dragon, would by itself have warranted: nevertheless, when regarded as the spontaneous and hasty performance of an improvisatore in painting—thrown off at a heat—and as a sort of finished sketch; it is of very considerable merit. In conception and design it is masterly and original. Other painters—Dominichino, as we have seen, amongst them—have represented the dreadful dragon and the valorous Christian knight, as by far the most prominent and conspicuous objects in their pictures, while Tintoretto, taking a new course, has assigned that station to the terrified princess: and having resolved on this, he seems, without waiting for reflection, or a second thought, to have brandished his pencils, and bravely rushed to the lists, and through his projected work, with rhapsodical fervour, without stopping to be very regardful of the text of the ancient legend, from which the subject of Saint George and the Dragon is ostensibly taken. That legend speaks not of the corse of any previous combatant, or victim, such as we here behold, lying near the dragon and on the ground: but, on the contrary, gives us to understand that the ferocious dragon *fed* upon the victims which he daily extorted from the Libyans. Two sheep *per diem* were at first offered by the terrified citizens of Selene, and after-

ward, when their flocks grew thin, or the dragon increased in his demand, and in his appetite, one sheep and a human victim were devoted, which the dragon as regularly devoured, as did the gigantic heroes of fee fau fum in the days of yore. The names of these destined sacrifices were drawn by lot, till, at length, the lot fell upon the king's daughter, and the utmost her distracted father could obtain from his loving subjects in the way of indulgence, or deference to his superior rank and authority, was a respite of the royal sacrifice for eight days*, during which the dragon ~~was of course~~ regularly appeased with his ~~man~~ and sheep *per diem*, of which he as regularly made his meals. Yet, as increasing the idea of danger, if not of dread, this slain and supine figure is perhaps admissible.

The spectator here, looks along the verdant margin of that lake, which, as Master Wynnyn de Worde verifieth, was in the immediate vicinity of his real or fictitious city of Selene, which the dragon had filled with terror. Beyond is the citadel, or perhaps royal palace, which looks somewhat too much like a solitary castle on a seacoast. St. George, mounted, as usual, on an impetuous war-steed, and with his flank toward

* Of course this is all allegorical fable. How it was supposed to be connected with polemic and biographical fact, is not very obvious. Whether Selene were a fabled African city, might be difficult to say. I do not find it recorded that any celebrated controversy between the Arians and Athanasians, or Arians and Pagans, was carried on at any real city of that name, which literally signifies the City of the Moon. To give intelligibility to the apologue, the king of Selene should be a pagan, and the controversy be carried on in a suburb, or without the walls of his city of Selene, and near the margin of a lake; a situation not at all unlikely to be that of an Athanasian monastery.

the painter, having, in due course of chivalry, arrived on the eighth day of respite, is making a desperate push at the dragon, and, having nearly driven him into the lake, is in the act of thrusting his lance between the distended jaws of the monster, whilst the alarmed damsel—alarmed by the din of combat, and by her extreme personal danger—has rushed forward to the immediate fore-ground.

There is a broad and bright burst of supernatural light in the sky, giving assurance, as we are led to conceive, of victory to the Arian knight, and miraculous deliverance to the princess. If it be asked why, in this case, she neither appears to rely on the celestial phenomenon, nor on the prowess of her champion? The answer is, that her face being averted from them, she sees neither, and has previously been panic struck with the extremity of her peril. The expression of this sentiment is much to be admired. Her attitude and countenance are in full accordance. She seems in rapid motion—rushing toward the observer in the extremity of her danger, with arms extended, as if imploring the interposition of heaven, and so immediately on the fore-ground, that it appears as if the next step would bring her out of the picture and into the open arms of the sympathising spectator. This figure is quite original.

Subservient to the supernal light in the sky, a secondary—but scarcely secondary—light, falls, with excellent effect, on the bust of the terrified princess, whilst a third portion of light, subordinate to these, catches on the white horse which the saint bestrides. Concerning the rest of the tinting—a breadth of dull coloured greensward, and some ill defined trees and bushes, brings conspicuously forward the broad, red,

but carelessly detailed, mantle of the princess, who wears a coronet, and is attired in a dark blue robe, approaching to purple. The draperies, though their component parts are not scholastically cast, appear to partake of the motion of the figure.

To speak of the work collectively—it has a certain primitive air, which gratifies taste, because it emanates from genius. If we knew not its author, nor the era of its production, we should say that it has evidently descended from the olden times, when the straight forward simplicity of plain truth, and obvious nature, was not endeavoured to be put to shame, or set aside, by modern refinements and conventional avoidances.

This picture also came to the National Gallery with the rest of the collection of the Rev. William Holwell Carr.

THE INITIATION, OR CONSECRATION, OF SAINT
NICHOLAS.

PAUL VERONESE.

PAUL CALIARI, surnamed (from his native city) Veronese, attached himself principally to the treatment of cheerful and festive subjects, where features of noble architecture, and gorgeous and splendid costumes, might with propriety be introduced, such as his justly celebrated “Marriage of Cana,” which a few years since was the delight of the Louvre, and his other banquets which were painted for the refectories of the great religious houses. His clear and vivid handling, and his light felicity of touch, which were peculiarly suited to the pictorial display of such subjects, were either the causes, or the effects,

of this partiality. In his present work, of the Communion, or Consecration, of St. Nicholas,—which (to use a clerical phrase) was “*translated*” from the church of *San Nicholas de Frari*, at Venice, to its present dignity—Paul has shown that, when occasion required, he well knew how to attemper those bright and lively, and almost intoxicating, colours, to graver, or more sober and solemn, tones, and could abate their vividness, without impairing their richness or efficiency.

This splendid altar-piece is, in truth, a very capital work. Rich, variegated, vigorous, dignified. In respect of the collocation of its colours, and the unity of its design—both cardinal requisites of the painter’s art—no praise can transcend its merits. It may be regarded as one of the heroes, if not as the Achilles, of our National Collection; and reflects great credit on the judgment of those governors of the British Institution who secured it for the public Gallery.

As Myra—the see to which we here behold the initiation or introduction of St. Nicholas—is a town or city of Anatolia, in Western Asia, the artist has availed himself of the locality, to diversify and enrich his composition by the introduction of two Oriental catechumen in turbanned head-dresses: before them are two ecclesiastical dignitaries, who appear to have ushered the holy bishop elect, into the presence of a venerable personage of archi-episcopal or pontifical appearance—the patriarch perhaps of a more extensive diocese, or perhaps the Pope himself,—to receive whose benediction, and to receive his own paraphernalia also, St. Nicholas is devoutly kneeling with his hands crossed over his breast, and a pious expression of countenance, or humble and sanctimo-

nious upward look, as if he presumed not on any self-worthiness.

The spectator's discernment is pre-eminently flattered, by at least the temporary gift or possession of a species of second sight. An Angel, bright with the sapphire or topaz-coloured drapery of the seraphic order,—but whose presence is not recognised by the holy prelates below—is conspicuously seen descending from heaven with the sacred crosier, mitre, and other insignia of sacerdotal dignity. Such poetic and splendid hyperboles (as we have before noticed) suited the genius of the earlier ages of the Romish church: nor may those modern prelates of our own, who assure their flocks and each other, that their acceptance of mitres and crosiers is consequent on a *divine call* to episcopacy, reasonably raise either moral or religious objection, or veracious scruple, concerning the introduction of this poetic and picturesque angel—a floating, gliding, self-sustained figure, miraculously descending, and clad in a flame-coloured, and a light blue, drapery, of celestial woof.

The angel is boldly and ably foreshortened, and in attitude somewhat—but not *very* nearly—resembles that which Michael Angelo has introduced into his *Dream of Human Life*; the present angel being rather more graceful than that of the great Florentine: yet, we must add, that his wings, though widely spread, are not very skilfully set on to his shoulders; the dexter wing in particular, is obscure and unintelligible. But, we scarcely need to repeat our remark here, that the setting on of angels' wings is rather an embarrassing task for a painter.

While St. Nicholas is performing his genuflections with devotion due, the other dignitaries who are

mentioned above, may be observed to have brought with them their clasped missals or litanies, to assist at the ceremonial; or we may suppose, that one of the books is the rubric wherein the name of the sainted bishop is to be enregistered. Upon one of these priests—an aged and bearded figure, with a venerable cast of countenance—the principal light falls with broad brilliancy and with excellent effect, sustained and brightly borne out as it is, by a deep toned mass of obscurity, consisting of the dark blue robe of the patriarch, and other rich dresses of his attendants, in shadow.

The composition derives an air of much importance from this patriarch—a bearded and divine-looking old man, pontifically robed, mitred, and adorned with other episcopal ornaments—being elevated, apparently, on a pedestal;—or it may be, that he is descending the steps from the high altar, or the porch of his cathedral; or possibly the approach to the Vatican, (for we write in ignorance of the localities of the consecration of St. Nicholas.) However, this should be understood, this simple and fine figure is full fraught with sacerdotal dignity. In his left hand, assisted by a young sacristan who is kneeling, (and whose vestment is diversified from the rest by being richly striped), he holds aloft the symbolical cross of the Redeemer, while his right, expresses benediction, and seems about to be imposed on the head of the humble pastor, Nicholas, who is apparently abasing himself that he may be exalted.

The light on the crimson-collared white stole or surplice of the chief officiating priest, or registrar, which is drawn and pencilled in admirable taste, and

with all that light dexterity of hand, for which Paul Veronese is so justly famed—this principal light, which extends to the fine head and venerable flowing beard of this distinguished figure—is skilfully connected with that on the saffron or topaz-coloured robe of the descending angel, by means of three strata of a grey horizontal cloud, which, passing across an aperture betwixt architectural columns, receive sunlight on their edges.

The emerald green colour which distinguishes the drapery of St. Nicholas, and which is judiciously spread about (or repeated, as painters technically say) in some other parts of the performance, was bold and novel at the time when the Veronese artist first employed it, and is in brilliant apposition to the bright ruby reds which play here and there through the picture: both seem to have the effect of electrically kindling the small portions of orange-tinged yellow into sparks of golden splendour; and the crimsons in particular, that of conferring the beauty of harmonious brilliancy on that effective white surplice which is so boldly introduced, cast into such picturesque forms, and is so tastefully pencilled. But, indeed, the folding of all the draperies is of first rate excellence: and we cannot but again make short advertence here to the dark blue vestment of the Aaron-looking patriarch, which, introduced as it is with reference to the surrounding tints, is so conducive to the general harmony; nor may we omit to mention that the venerable and devout characters of the heads—particularly of the three principal ones—are impressively pertinent to the solemn ceremony that is proceeding. Collectively, the work is like a

rich and harmonious concert "of solemn-breathing airs," performed on various instruments, under the presiding power of a Handel,

"Where the rich stream of music winds along,
Deep, majestic, smooth, and strong."

And we may add, that, on the whole, the praise which Lanzi has bestowed generally on the works of this artist, is particularly merited by the present. He says, "The genius of Paolo was naturally noble, and even magnificent and vast, as well as pleasing. He aimed at improving his style of colouring upon the models of Titian and Tintoret, as well as to surpass them in elegance and variety of ornament."

Many readers will probably think that he has succeeded in this aim; or would, were they to see more of his works. In another page the Abaté says of this great graphic ornament of Verona and Venice, "that he added to lively and dignified features, selected for the most part from nature, graceful motions, fine contrasts and expressions, noble vestments both for their forms and materials; the most lively colours, whether similar or contrasted, and harmonized with a peculiar degree [kind] of art, such as is not to be taught." But all that any writer means, who uses these words, as far as respects colouring, is, that the Science which governs such Fine Art, is unknown to him, or has not yet, to his knowledge, been analysed, or developed, and ascertained. It is now known among the initiated, that a great deal of the fascination of this optical display, depends on the skilful juxta-positions and recurrences of antagonist colours.

Not inferior to these attainments (proceeds Lanzi)

was the handling of his pencil, which, to the utmost rapidity, unites the greatest judgment, and that effects, decides, and achieves something in every stroke—gifts which had become familiar to Paul Veronese. To these praises should be added a recognition of the bold grandeur, combined with elegance, of his contours.

The National Gallery contains but a single additional picture, which was formerly in the Orleans Collection, from the pencil of Paul Veronese; viz. *The Rape of Europa*: in the treatment of which the artist has been not less successful than in the *Consecration of St. Nicholas*. As his *Wedding at Cana* is pervaded by an air of joyous festivity; and as his *Initiation of St. Nicholas to his Bishopric*, is governed by a sentiment of rich solemnity, homogeneous with the pious pomp of the church of Rome; so the seduction (or *abduction*) of Europa, is all melting and amorous blandishments. We deem this skilful adaptation of treatment to subject, by whomsoever manifested, as belonging to a high order of professional merit. A comparison of the marrowy and voluptuous tones of the seduction of the lovely, innocent, credulous, fascinated, princess of Tyre, with the solemn richness and ecclesiastical pomp of the *Saint Nicholas*, which every tasteful visitor of the National Gallery is happily and easily enabled to make, will show that this master knew, or felt, that the true use of colour was to aid and strengthen *sentiment*, and thus to enforce *truth*, while it increased our pictorial pleasure,

THE RAPE OF EUROPA.

PAUL VERONESE.

As the subject of this picture carries us back quite into those remote depths of time of which Thucydides has learnedly and rationally treated, when the Homeric mythology was but forming, and fact and fable were murkily blended or scumbled together; and as Paul Veronese has in no respect violated the letter or spirit of the classic legend—it may not be esteemed useless to the less learned of our readers, or otherwise improper, if we submit a brief sketch of the fable, and of the fact upon which we believe it to have been grounded, before we describe, or criticise, the picture as a work of art.

The princess Europa, from whom the division of the globe which we inhabit is believed to have derived its appellation, lived during those far distant ages—probably before Jupiter was thought of as a deity, and while he was simply a prince of Crete; in which island, according to Cicero, and Lucian, his *tomb* was once shown to strangers.

From Herodotus, and from the author whom we have named above, it is known that in those early ages, piratical expeditions were common in the Mediterranean. The Cretans were among the first people who had constructed ships, and when once they had acquired the method of navigating these, they soon took up the profession of piracy, under the command of those who were distinguished for bravery and enterprise; and this was so far from being thought reproachful, that it was even deemed glorious during those barbarous ages. It is then by no means impro-

bable that an enterprising prince of Crete may have piratically landed on the coast of Phenicia from a rude bark, bearing a sculptured bull, or bull's head, on its prow, (and probably named the Bull,) and finding the princess of Tyre at play with other maidens near the shore, he may have seized and carried her off to Crete. This appears to be the most natural and probable explication of the old Greek legend of the rape of Europa.

The event notoriously happened during the fabulous ages; and what extravagant fabulists the Greek poets were, is pretty well known. But the story as they have transmitted it, and as it is here depicted by Paul Veronese, is briefly as follows—

Europa was the admired daughter of Agenor, king of Phenicia, and Telephassa. She was so beautiful that Jupiter became enamoured of her, and, the more effectually to engage, first her attention and afterward her affections, assumed the shape of a bull, and mingled with her father's herds, while the princess with her attendants were gathering flowers in the meadows: Lucian says a *white* bull, just as we find him here represented in Paolo's picture, that he moreover, had horns gracefully turned; a lovely leering eye; and—the wag facetiously adds—that he lowed so amiably, it was a pleasure to hear him.

Europa caressed the beautiful white bull, and, gradually emboldened, took the fancy, as he kneeled down, to seat herself upon his back. But, no sooner was the bull-god aware that she was firmly seated, than he rose, moved toward the margin of the sea, and presently plunging in—the alarmed princess grasping his horn, and Neptune smoothing the way for them—he swam over to the isle of Crete, &c. &c.

Lucian is believed to have taken his droll confabu-

lation between Zephyrus and Notus, from which the above is briefly compressed, from an ancient Greek picture of this subject, which was a great favourite with the artists of antiquity, and was esteemed to be so interesting that the Sidonians impressed the rape of Europa upon some of their coins. Madame Dacier thinks that Anacreon's pleasant little Ode on the subject, is also copied from a still more ancient painting,—we mean that Ode of which Moore's delightful translation begins—

“Methinks the pictured Bull we see
Is amorous Jove.—It must be he!
How fondly blest he seems to bear
That fairest of Phenician fair!”

Our readers, who have perused the above, will scarcely have failed to observe the near agreement which subsists between the classic story and the picture here produced by the Veronese artist; almost the only difference being, that the painter, in adapting it to his art, has added a few touches and ideas of his own, which are both poetical and picturesque, and, at the same time, so perfectly homogeneous with the subject, that they appear like restorations of the lapses of literature and tradition.

The beauteous and seducing bull, having just received his precious burthen, is still kneeling; the princess, with the assistance of two of her approving maids of honour, having confidently seated herself; while a third and more matronly attendant has presumed to offer some prudent admonition or remonstrance, to which Europa—as we see by the fine turn of her head, and expression of her countenance—is blandly and innocently replying that she entertains

no fears, and that it is her royal will and pleasure to ride on a beautiful bull. The amorous Jupiter meanwhile is insidiously, but consecutively, licking that trusting right foot of the princess which is raised from the ground.

There are some capital inuendoes in the performance; for the adoption and introduction of which the Italian artist, having shown both his wit and his wisdom, will, as we trust, find due sympathy in England. Two little winged loves are sporting in the air above, gathering fruit from the back-ground trees, and scattering roses; below, the "amiable" bull is garlanded with a wreath of flowers, which, passing around his youthful and heifer-like horns, trails on the ground, and is held by the master Cupid. It is obviously to be understood as the leading-string of Love. But where is the other hand of this Cupid? Ha! By Jupiter! he has taken "the bull by the horn"—by the *right* horn. And pray observe; that the little wanton, intriguing deity, who "rules and reigns without control," though he is prepared to lead the lovers to the Dictæan cavern, here places one of his feet on and against the knee of the bull; which is of course to be understood as a delicate intimation that Love restrains Jupiter from instantly rising with his beloved burthen:—as a painted whisper of "*Not yet*," and a manifestation of his mighty power and quick apprehensiveness in critical moments. But why this intimation of "*Not yet*?" Because (as the reader has been rendered aware) the oldest of the attendants on the princess, is lecturing her on prudence; and Love will rather sooth, than run the least risk of increasing, her alarm, at a moment so inauspicious.

While the nearer parts are thus teeming with brilliancies of thought and execution, the island of Crete is dimly seen at a distance across the sea ; and further on in the picture—that is to say, between the foreground and the margin of the bay—the figures of the principal group *re-appear*—the two attendant maidens leading Europa and the Bull, while Cupid floats in the air above, performing the part of a pilot. It is here observable, that the admonishing matron has disappeared, as if she had absolutely refused to be of the bull party, and had returned to Tyre. Now what would our late learned professor have said to this? He who has aphoristically pronounced “duplicity of moment” to be “*inadmissible?*” Paul is here either under his lash, or, gloriously offending, has risen to a fault true critics dare not mend.

And what will our readers say, or think, here? We cannot tell. We can only say what we think ourselves. We think that there are exceptions even to this dominant, or dogmatical, rule. And, if such exceptions are ever to be tolerated ; and if the telling of a story be (as the same authority has declared it to be)—the first virtue of an historical painter;—according to these premises, we say, that the re-introduction of Europa and the Bull, is *not*, in the present instance, excommunicable, because the sequel toward which it leads the imagination is important ; and if that sequel could be suggested while the commencement of the drama was under representation, we see none but a merely scholastic reason for excluding the suggestion, or for not cutting a Gordian knot. From the rape of *Europa* is said to be derived the denomination of one of the great divisions of the globe. Jupiter seduced and abducted, or carried her off, from

the flowery plains of Phenicia to the margin of the sea, and there swam with her over to Crete. If the painter felt, thought, or knew, that he could convey these ideas—*all* of them, and more especially this latter idea—by not only representing Europa mounting the bull, but also showing the transfigured God in progress with his fair burthen; and if he has boldly and at once overcome all scruples of repugnance, and done so—Minerva forbid that we should sign his proscription! Let who will “throw the first stone” at this woman taken in the act of elopement.

The reader will expect at least a few words on the technic merits of this capital work. In composition, it is, we believe, perfectly original; and, to our taste, eminently successful. On whatever scientific rules it may be planned or constructed, those rules are effectually hidden in their own successful application. The spectator is sensible of the painter’s magic, yields willingly to its influence; but perceives not his spell. The figure of Europa—indeed those of all the Phenician maidens—is “full, and round, and fair;” or *embon-point* (as our transmarine neighbours say)—like the generality of the females of the Venetian school. She is attired in a variegated robe of white brodered with gold; a rich mantle, lined with light crimson heightened with white, in the true transparent Venetian taste, is thrown over it with superb effect: this too is embroidered on the outside (of which little is seen) with Tyrian purple and gold. A dark metallic zone, such as were anciently worn in Phenicia and Greece, is beneath her beautiful and voluptuous bosom, which sets off the bust of Europa to most inviting advantage. She wears pen-

dant eardrops, her fair and braided hair is decked with jewels, and her sandals are *Chaucered* (as an antiquary would write) with amethysts; her hands, arms, and face—(of the appropriate and fine expression which is superinduced on the bland features of the latter, we have treated above;)—her hands, arms, and face, are delicately drawn and pencilled, and—where foreshortening is needed—ably foreshortened. The carnation tints throughout are exquisite: true to the nature of fair and feminine complexions, yet sympathising deliciously with the pink mantle of Europa and the creamy white of the bull, so as to stir the optic sense, or that part of the connoisseur's imagination that is connected therewith, with the most delightful emotion. Indeed the painting of the nudities throughout, is of the true pulpy Venetian texture, having all the firm softness of flesh in its ideal beauty, such as it would require the pen of Anacreon to describe. If the Cupid of Parrhasius was fed on Cyprian roses, the Europa of Paul Veronese must have banqueted on the "butter and honey" of the prophet Isaiah, or of her native land—that land of promise from whence she was seduced.

As the vicinity of Tyre is the scene represented, the rich dresses which are introduced, in no degree militate against the remote antiquity of the transaction. Jewelled ornaments from Tyre and Sidon were worn by the heroes of the Iliad, and the *rakam*, or embroidery, of Babylonia, was famous in Western Asia, even before the time of "Joseph's coat of many colours." A piece of this Venetian or Tyrian drapery (for Tyre was the Venice of antiquity) lies on the ground, and leads off the light leftward from the principal group; which mass of light on the bull

and principal figures, is broad, central, and broken into picturesque shapes. This drapery also contributes to the expression of space, by keeping back the distant island and the sea, and consequently to the general effect of the picture.

One of the attendant maidens is habited in light blue and white, and the others in rich crimson, orange, and purple. Beyond this charming group, and between it and those darkly-verdant trees of the mid-ground, which conduce so happily to the brilliancy of the lights, is a reddish brown cow, which contributes to harmonize the colours, while her presence is well accounted for by that passage of the legend which says, that the transformed deity mingled with the herds of Agenor. The head of another cow peers into the picture from the left side, but seems ~~too much~~ isolated from the rest of the composition. This is *en passant*.

The casting of the draperies throughout, is bold and decided, yet careful and tasty, as those from the easel of this artist always are. He appears to have painted them with a well replenished pencil, a light hand, and a ready and playful fancy. The glittering heightenings of these draperies, and of other lively and principal parts that are susceptible of such touches—both of the Europa and the St. Nicholas—are sometimes presented to us pure, and sometimes seen through a thin glazing of transparent colour, which is frequently a rich lake, orpiment, or Venetian green, and appearing, as they do, to partake of the nature of light itself, constitutes one of the powerful charms of the Venetian (as of the Dutch) school, and is by no artist more successfully revealed, concealed, or displayed, as occasion admits or requires,

than by Paul Veronese. Ingenuous virgin blushes are scarcely more charming than these fascinating tints and touches, when thus transparently employed.

If this picture of Jupiter and Europa has a fault, beyond that which we have hinted at above, of the lonely cow's head, it is—as we presume to think—that, considering the southern latitude of the scene, and the genial nature of the subject, the sky would have admitted of a little more cheerful warmth, without abating the general harmony.

THE HOLY FAMILY.

FEDERIGO BAROCCIO.

IN the course of his education as a painter, Baroccio studied the style of Coreggio ere he formed his own, but has alloyed with prettiness, the vigorous and sterling truth of his master. It is however “delightful (according to Lanzi) to see the great variety of colours Baroccio has employed, so exquisitely blended by his pencil; and there is perhaps no music more finely harmonized to the ear than his pictures are to the eye.” By his biographer, Bellori, this artist is spoken of as a religious man, whose pencil was constantly engaged on pious and exemplary subjects, with the exception of a few portraits, and two pictures which he painted of the burning of Troy. Bellori's words in this place, stand in such curious contravention to the painted moral of the Holy Family before us, that we submit them (as rendered into English by Mr. T. Roscoe) to the reader's notice.

“Excepting on these occasions (says the Italian)

his pencil may be said to have been *dedicated to religion*; so *devout*, so *tender*, and so *calculated to awaken feelings of piety*, are the *sentiments expressed* in his pictures."—Go to! Signor Bellori; unless you are joking. The piety of Baroccio must have been a painted sepulchre, or he must have been the most egregious ignoramus that ever passed thumb through palette, if he could "trust he had a good conscience," while he was permitting himself to degrade, as in the present performance, the prime objects of Catholic veneration.

Let the reader here turn and look at "the *Madonna del Gatto*," for by that title was the present Holy Family known, while it remained at the *Cæsare* palace, from whence the late Mr. Holwell Carr brought it to England.—The reader has, I believe, already been rendered aware that, in order colloquially to distinguish the numerous Holy Families and Madonnas of Italy from each other, recourse has been had to the expedient of denominating them severally from some subordinate accessory circumstance, and he sees that in the present instance there sits a begging *cat* at the left hand lower corner. Now, this *Madonna del gatto* must needs be regarded as quite incompatible with Bellori's estimate of the pious dedication of Baroccio's professional powers; since none can seriously believe that an artist, devout, dedicated to religion, and whose pictures, with the exception of two of Troy in flames, are "tender, and calculated to awaken feelings of piety," would have represented St. John as terrifying an innocent goldfinch, which he holds in his grasp, with the dreadful apprehension of being delivered up to a ferocious creature of a hundred times its strength; and teasing

and tantalizing a begging cat, (by holding up a helpless victim a little out of her reach,) with the false promise of a delicious morsel of a goldfinch !

“ Who but must laugh if such a man there be ? ”

Mr. Ottley writes of this brutal, barbarous, and pious occupation, that “ Saint John is *amusing* himself thus : that the infant Saviour, nestling in *its* mother’s bosom, looks on, and *is pleased* ; while old Joseph leans forward, and seems to enjoy the joke mightily.” This is not exactly the truth ; but, in point of moral rectitude or turpitude, comes pretty near it. It would have been more correct to have written, The infant Christ pauses from the nipple ; the Madonna looks on with complacent smiles, whilst old Joseph leans forward, &c.

But Mr. Valpy’s anonymous scribe pretends to see—and to see without much disapprobation—even more than this, of Bellori’s barbarous piety. He says, “ The infant Saviour *is highly diverted*.” And then comes the following amiably bright conventional apology : “ Now though this does seem very much at war with all *conventional* notions of the solemnity of the subject, the artist might reply, it was in *harmony with Nature* and fact ; and that the Holy Family, no doubt, partook of the INNOCENT *enjoyments* of their condition, as well as *others of their kind*. This is difficult to answer ; but there can be no doubt of the propriety, in *such* cases, of sacrificing something to received opinion.”

Oh ! what a wretched labyrinthine libel upon Christianity, and upon human nature ! Difficult to answer !—Is it ? Yes : To a critic whose very starting-points are wilful perversions, or gross mistakes,

of viciousness for innocence, and conventionalities for nature*; and who writes as if mankind had agreed on the propriety of instilling lessons of cruelty into the minds of their children, and as if he knew that religion had sanctioned and even adopted the detestable custom. Surely the painter must have fancied, and this nameless apologist of cruelty masquerading in the garb of innocence, must have indulged and adopted the fancy—that he was painting an altar-piece for the sanctum sanctorum of the Holy Inquisition. That indeed might confer some meaning on the group, and enable us to account for it with some show of reason, or, at least, of motive.

I should like to hear what Maria Edgeworth, or Hannah More, or the dignitaries of our orthodox church, would say upon this subject to the Italian literati; to Mr. Ottley; to Mr. Valpy's anonymous critic; and to Federigo Baroccio—the *tender*, the *devout* painter, who *calculated his works to awaken feelings of piety*. I hope they would not omit to notice that this innocent amusement is assigned to St. John, who here presents himself in his camel-skin dress, as if he had caught the bird in crossing the desert—I hope they would not, in the rectitude of their sense of retribution and poetical justice, omit to notice that St. John was himself a wild finch, who was afterward encaged and delivered up to a merci-

* Any reflecting person may easily perceive how much nearer Mr. Valpy's anonymous critic would have been to truth, had he written, This does seem very much at war with all our *natural* notions of the solemnity of the subject; but the artist might reply, It was in harmony with *conventionalities*—which is the exact converse of the proposition of Mr. Valpy's anonymous critic.

less and longing cat. The innocent goldfinch—of God, would doubtless remind them of “the lamb of God that *taketh away* the *sins* of the world,” (which purification the Baptist was expressly sent to proclaim.) These religious writers are fond (at least all but the Edgeworth) of descanting upon typical meanings, and would doubtless admonish Baroccio and his abettors accordingly.

That the critics have not misconstrued the artist here, as in the case of Julio Romano; and that Baroccio is liable for the full amount of ethical damages, is further deducible from the action of the right hand and arm of the Madonna, which, although it must be allowed to compose *secundem artem* with the rest of the forms, and to fall in happily with their pyramidal arrangement, expresses, that she really—like the very commonest of unreflecting mammas, with whom wicked education commences—solicits the attention of her darling infant to the inhuman torture of the cat and goldfinch, and confidently trusts that the Son of the Most High, to announce whom the angel Gabriel had been dispatched from heaven to her, will find it exceedingly diverting, and will enjoy the joke as mightily as old Joseph. It would be fortunate for this Madonna (as well as for del Sarto's) were they entitled to any sympathy, that the National Gallery does not yet possess a Holy Virgin of Raphael, and that they do not hang very near to the Holy Family of Garofalo; or assuredly they would either blush or be put out of countenance, more especially the present parody from the pencil of Baroccio.

Mr. Ottley, however, in a great measure redeems himself; and while he joins, though too faintly, in

reprehending the painter, offers, with a tribute to his professional merit, a more acceptable apology, than we have felt ourselves called upon to condemn from the pen of Mr. Valpy's anonymous critic. Mr. Ottley adds, "In treating the subject of the Madonna and Child, or of the Holy Family, preceding artists had seldom forgotten that a certain devoutness of sentiment, and dignified deportment, in the figures, could not properly be altogether dispensed with:—and though sometimes they would allot secular employments to these venerated personages, exhibiting Joseph at his carpenter's bench, or the virgin filling a vase with water from a streamlet, still they were careful to avoid any thing approaching to unbecoming levity." [But it is surely a weightier matter than this peccadillo acknowledgment implies.] "It is, however, due to Baroccio to observe, that his pictures in general have no want of that devout feeling, the absence of which we have thought it our duty to notice in the present instance. In other respects, this is a good specimen of his talents, of his grouping, of the easy flow of his pencil, and of the beauties and vices of his colouring; which last have occasioned it to be remarked, that, like Parrhasius of old, he fed his figures on roses."

The technical merits of the picture are certainly considerable, and had they been employed in the embellishment of a *suitable* subject, would have been worthy of high commendation. They are only *not* suited to a single page of the solemn importance of the mysterious history of human Redemption. As an exhibition of colour and chiar-oscuro, the Holy Family of Baroccio is bland, dulcet, luxurious—suited, perhaps, to *unholy* subjects,—and would be

harmonious, but for the somewhat too cutting shapes of a curtain, and the termination of a wall, or partition, behind the figures :

“ Softly sweet in Lydian measures,
Soon it *soothes* the soul to *pleasures* :”

But that is all. It does not elevate the soul toward religious sentiment, as such exhibitions ought. It is *not* “ calculated to awaken feelings of piety,” but the very contrary. Had it been called by any other name than it is, we had contemplated it with much more complacency. A domestic scene (for example) in the neighbourhood of Versailles, and of the age of the *Grand Monarque*, or any thing of that sort, might have reconciled us to much of its beauty and sophistication. The simpering, mindless milliner of a mamma—whom nobody would suspect of being intended for the Holy Mary, but for the, absolutely necessary or unfortunate, halo of golden light which encircles her head ; and the pleased and curly-pated children, might then have seemed at home : averting our eyes as much as possible from the goldfinch and the cat, we might then have been tempted to say, What charming little fellows ! ah ! these are of the Fiamingo breed : what fine lofty craniums they are blessed with ! What pity it is that early education should be carried on upon a plan so radically bad, where the children are so well formed : what a wretched system of purblind conventionalities must prevail at Versailles, to reach so infectiously to its nurseries : no wonder that in after life,

“ Custom should consecrate to Fame,
What Reason else would give to shame.”

Notwithstanding that the colouring, and the cha-

racters of the countenances of this work, partake so much of false refinement ; of prettiness ; of Parrhasian rose-feeding ; and courtly education, such as attends on the commencement of the corruption of taste in art and morals ; yet the draperies are cast into masterly and agreeable folds, and the red, and blue, and the pale pink, and the yellow, and the red and white *roses* of the boys, are in good accordance. But, after all that Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. Ottley have written on this latter topic—if the Children and the Madonna are to be supposed to have taken the colours of their food—*peaches* had been more pertinent to the present performance.

Mr. Carr obtained this picture from the Cesare palace in Perugia.

SUSANNA AND THE ELDERS.

LODOVICO CARACCI.

“SEPARATE the precepts from the practice of the Caracci (says Fuseli) and they are in possession of my submissive homage ;” implying that, apart from certain precepts prescribed to their disciples, they *merit* the homage of those who have any sound pretensions to good taste in pictures. In that case, let due homage be paid to Lodovico Caracci and his admirable nephews, for their practice *is* separate from their precepts. Looking at their works, our knowledge or ignorance of their ostensible theory, or the system of rudimental principles which they found it eligible to impart to their pupils, is quite accidental, and in itself entirely disconnected from their productions. Fuseli might fancy himself obliged to advert

to those celebrated rules of the school of Bologna, because he was addressing students from his academical chair; but connoisseurs, or mere spectators of the works of the illustrious family who were the founders of that school, have nothing at all to do with them; and the less, inasmuch as the practice of the Caraccii does not appear to have been more than occasionally, and very gently, influenced by those eclectic rules.

According to Sir Joshua Reynolds, rules of art, are to be regarded as fences, to be occasionally removed, and placed where trespass is expected. Lodovico Caracci perhaps, entertaining the same sentiment, and living in an age and country, when and where various conflicting precepts, or principles, were set before the pupils of the various masters in painting, with the solemn gravity of aphoristic authority, framed his, by selecting from all, what was meritorious in each. Through some inadvertency (as we will suppose) our professor, in one place, terms this "indiscriminate imitation," and pronounces it to be a course of proceeding which conducts the student in painting toward mediocrity. It is, however, a course of proceeding which, in some other arts, has led toward refinement and perfection. Nor does the professor Opie quite agree on this point with the professor Fuseli: and, perhaps, after all, no other obvious course of *instruction* may remain after the broader channels, or roads, of originality in art, are *presumed* to be preoccupied: although such preoccupation may not, and does not, obstruct those *flights* of GENIUS which wise preceptors never pretend to teach.

Mr. Ottley has described this picture of the Hebrew Elders soliciting Susanna, with not more, but (as we

presume to think) rather less, than his accustomed ability. We say this, chiefly on account of those concluding and important comments, on its merits, or demerit, in which it is our lot to differ from that gentleman—though not without final hope of reconciliation.

“The subject (he says) is here represented with less violation of decency [here is no violation of decency at all, that we can perceive, on the part of the painter] than is commonly the case. The upper part of the body of Susanna only, is naked; the rest of her figure being enveloped in the ample folds of a dark green [blue] drapery. One of the Elders leans forward, and appears to *remonstrate* with her, using arts of *persuasion*; whilst his companion behind, seems alarmed at her *cries for help*, and already determined upon REVENGE. This picture is painted with force of effect, and at the same time is highly studied in the parts. *We are obliged to add, however, that the head of the female is deficient in expression.*”

But should not Mr. Ottley have reflected that *remonstrance*, and *persuasion*, are such very different things, that if the old sinner be remonstrating, he cannot be using arts of persuasion; and if he be using arts of persuasion, he cannot be remonstrating? Again, if his companion behind him were alarmed at the cries of Susanna for help, and were determined upon revenge, he would not be, as we here see him, with coarse, vulgar hope, and desire, in his looks, and in the act of solicitation.

But the truth is—at least according to our perception—that Susanna has *not* yet cried for help. Mr. Ottley has entirely mistaken the painter's point of time. The Elders have but just approached their lovely victim,

and solicitation, and entreaty, is all they *yet* think of. Revenge is, as yet, *quite* out of the question.

Mr. Ottley has felt obliged to add, that the "*head of the female is deficient in expression.*" This is what we chiefly regret. Does it mean that Susanna appears not sufficiently to dread the peril she is in? Or, not sufficiently to resent the affront? Or, what else does it mean?

Happily for the lords of the creation, and—we may add, the ladies too—Nature does not appear to have intended that men should view the same female countenance, with precisely the same sentiments, or we should be far more quarrelsome than we are, concerning fine female faces. There is certainly something very peculiar in this head of the chaste Susanna, and it may have happened that this peculiarity has not accorded with Mr. Ottley's taste for female beauty. There is *peculiarity* in every man's taste, as in every woman's character of countenance, and it is the sympathy, or harmony, between these, that excites love or pity, and on which is founded, the adage that "Men differ in their tastes," as well as Plato's interesting androgynous fable: and when Milton wishes to interest us in favour of his Eve, he informs us, that Adam beheld

" Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth *peculiar* graces."

But for such considerations as these, it would be painful to differ from a gentleman of Mr. Ottley's reputation for critical taste in pictures, so entirely as, at first, we must appear to do on the present occasion. Yet we may not here dissemble our feeling, that the seeming incapability, or incompetence, of resentment

on the part of Susanna, or her seeming unconsciousness of the extremity of her danger—whichsoever be the point of critical objection—deepens, or renders more intense, the interest which is felt in her favour; and that the expression, the—not violent, but delicate, expression—of alarmed innocence, which is superinduced on the peculiarly chaste character of her beauty, is so strictly appropriate in its design, and so transcendental in its accomplishment! that all other considerations, and all other sentiments, are absorbed in, or fade away before, its effulgence. It would alone be sufficient to consecrate the picture.

As those who are too honest to dread robbers, and too honourable minded and inexperienced to entertain a thought on the subject, place no guards; so the Susanna of Caracci seems (almost) too pure minded to feel alarm. And this exquisite purity, constitutes the heart-felt charm of her countenance: while it confers pathos on the painter's design, it draws additional loveliness, and additional sympathy, from the peril which environs her. It arouses our chivalry with our love and our pity; enlists every virtuous energy in her cause; and places the beauty and chastity of the young Hebrew bride—like that of the lady in Milton's *Comus*—under celestial protection.

——“ If Virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her;”

as, according to the sacred scriptures, it afterward *did*, in raising up the prophet Daniel to rescue her fair fame, and vindicate her innocence, to the utter confusion of her hoary calumniators.

Lodovico Caracci, not less aware than those other painters who had previously treated this subject, that

men sympathise rather with the energies of human nature, than with its moral proprieties; but, at the same time, far more aware than they, that the essence and critical delicacy of his subject demanded, if not the entire suppression or proscription of all voluptuous manifestation, at least that such revealments should subserve, or yield, to paramount, and purer, and nobler, sentiments entertained in favour of an intended victim of lust or calumny, has sought, and found, distinction as an artist, in the mystic depth of his philosophical reflections, and his power of urging them into such ungarish light, as is the vehicle or element, of sound, wise, and tasteful, discernment.

To this youthful, chaste, and unsuspecting innocence, the coarse vulgarity of the complotting Elders, is in admirable contrast. The most vulgar of them is drawing away a drapery, with which Susanna has hastily veiled her beauties, with his right hand, while with his left he points to some umbrageous recess in the garden. The colour and disposition of this drapery, shows the carnation tints of her flesh, to picturesque advantage. The draperies of both the complotters, are cast in a good taste; and the coarseness of the colour and texture of their flesh, is successfully opposed to the "full and round and fair" delicacy of that of the heroine; which seems, but may not be—the work of a superior hand.

However much the careful and exemplary style in which this picture is pencilled—if penciling it may be called, where the instrument of performance is so successfully concealed in the mysteries of its own merits:—however much this delicacy of execution, and the artist-like contrivance of the chiar-oscuro, may be thought worthy of regard and approbation—

they are but as trifles, when compared with the poetic, and almost celestial, charm, that hallows the chaste innocence and beauty of the Susanna, which is of the very essence of the kind of excellence of which this fine subject for a picture, is susceptible. As we stand before it, the very music of the painter's art, seems breathing around us.

In writing the above remarks, I have been—I know not whether the reader will esteem it abstemious, scrupulously squeamish—or what; and have some little fear, that he will think I have been this at his expense; when I confess that—though urged—I would not look at what Hazlitt has left us concerning this fine picture, till I had first embodied, and given local habitation to, my own observations and feelings on the subject. I fancied they would thus be more genuine, though they should prove less attractive.—And now that I have perused Hazlitt, I so nearly repent me of the forbearance, and am yet so reluctant to cancel what I have written, that I shall—somewhat unmercifully, I own—throw the indulgent reader upon the horns of my dilemma, and myself upon his indulgence, by inserting rather a copious, but to my mind (although I do not on every point, coincide with him) delightful, extract from this fervid and susceptible writer. I give timely, if not temerarious, notice, however, that I shall finally hope to persuade the reader that all this discussion is for his benefit. Hazlitt says—

“We sometimes, in viewing a celebrated collection, meet with an old favourite—a *first love* in such matters, that we have not seen for many years, which greatly enhances the delight. We have, perhaps, pampered our imaginations with it all that time; its

charms have sunk deep into our minds ; we wish to see it once more, that we may confirm our judgment and renew our vows. The *Susanna and the Elders*, at Mr. Angerstein's, was one of those that came upon us under these circumstances. We had seen it formerly, among other visions of our youth, in the Orleans collection—where we used to go and look at it by the hour together, till our hearts thrilled with its beauty, and our eyes were filled with tears. How often had we thought of it since ; how often spoken of it ! There it was, still the same lovely phantom as ever—not as when Rousseau met Madame de Warens, after a lapse of twenty years, who was grown old and wrinkled—but as if the young Jewish beauty had been just surprised in that unguarded spot—crouching down in one corner of the picture, the face turned back, with a mingled expression of terror, shame, and unconquerable sweetness, and the whole figure shrinking into itself, with bewitching grace and modesty ! It is by Lodovico Caracci, and is worthy of his name, from its truth and purity of design, its expression, and its mellow depth of tone. Of the *Elders*, one is represented in the attitude of advancing towards her, while the other beckons her to rise. We know of no painter who could have improved upon the *Susanna*, except Coreggio, who, with all his capricious blandishments, and wreathed angelic smiles, would hardly have given the same natural, unaffected grace, the same perfect womanhood."

The differences here of susceptibility and of opinion, between two public writers, both men of taste, learning, and of some experience in the Art, will not escape

the critical reader, or even the tyro in matters of taste. To the latter it may constitute, no uninstruc-tive lesson. According to Ottley, "the head of the female is *deficient in expression*:" according to Hazlitt, it has "*a mingled expression of terror, shame, and unconquerable sweetness*." Excepting for the old and well-founded adage, it must needs appear

"Strange that such difference *should be*."

But anon, comes a third critic, who wishes also to be descriptive and explanatory, (as is stated in his title-page :) And what does he say? Why, he says, that the innocence of Susanna is too pure for her to be conscious of the full extent of her danger; and that this innocent purity, with its concomitant modesty, combined with a certain individual peculiarity, constitutes the real charm, and the just adaptation of this fine female countenance.

Are these mental impressions reconcilable? Not quite, perhaps. But we may remark, that Mr. Ottley has not said that the head of Sussanna is deficient in *character*; and as the *expression* of terror, if it be there at all, is but just faintly dawning, quite in its incipency, and amounting to scarcely more than apprehensiveness; here is—if we grant (as, with sound critical philosophy on our side, we surely may) that Hazlitt has set down that "*unconquerable sweetness*" to the account of *expression*, which properly belongs to *character*.—Here is, we say, in this case, a point of approximation between the three opinions, which may perhaps fall in with that of the reader; perhaps, also, with the intention of Lodovico Caracci. There is something, too, calling for allowance, in

Hazlitt's "first love." The peculiar character of this fine female countenance, has fallen in with *his* feelings of the beautiful, though not with Mr. Ottley's.

Of Lodovico's picture, no more at present : but we shall conclude this article with a little plain speaking, which will, perhaps, be endeavoured to be canted into *personality*—that seems to be the conventional stigma, or brand, that is just now employed against those who call down deserved blame upon the vocabulary ignoramuses, with whose unsound pretensions we conceive it to be part of our public duty not to seem to acquiesce, but rather to treat, here and there, with a little honest exposure : we say here and there—for to have followed them through the National Gallery, wherever they have mistated facts, or set forth blunders as criticism, would more than have filled our book.

Mr. Ottley, as we have ventured to notice above, has totally mistaken the painter's choice of moment ; and into this error, and into the mistake of blue for green drapery—as into that of Bethany for Jerusalem in del Piombo's picture—has Mr. Valpy's apothecary, most punctually followed his physician's prescription, though without acknowledgment, having shown merely the *finesse* of clothing some of Mr. Ottley's ideas in other words. His affectation of wonder at the comparative circumscription of the powers of modern artists,—whom no person not grossly deficient in observation, as well as reflection, would thus indiscriminately mass together—comes with peculiar grace, and extraordinary brilliancy of effect, to be sure, after such palpable displays of the hollowness of his own critical craft ; and then, as if to clinch his anonymous carelessness and incom-

petency, immediately follows—as information given to the public—the fib, that “Raphael died at thirty-three,” when it has been so often repeated that he lived to be thirty-seven.

The Susanna was one of Mr. Angerstein's pictures, and, as we have intimated above, was formerly in the Orleans collection.

ST. PETER AND THE APPARITION OF CHRIST.

ANNIBALE CARACCI.

THIS is not a scriptural subject, but a depicted tradition, or legend, of the Romish church. Peter, says the Catholic legend, had escaped from Rome, in order to save himself from impending martyrdom, and was hurrying along the Appian way, when he was met by his master, bearing his cross. “*Lord! where goest thou?*” inquired the surprised saint: to which the Saviour replied, that he was going to Rome, to be crucified a second time, finding his disciples feared to attest the truth of his mission with their blood.

Mr. Ottley says, “This picture is one of the most studied and highly finished performances of Annibale; and is especially admirable for the consummate skill displayed by him in the foreshortened figure of Christ; which has been long considered as one of the most perfect specimens of the kind, and almost seems to walk out of the canvass; an effect, which is not more the result of the correctness of that figure in respect of outline and lineal perspective, than of the judicious arrangement of its lights and shadows. The figure

of St. Peter is not of equal merit. The landscape in the back-ground is beautiful."

The landscape is good, and shows that St. Peter must have stolen away from Rome very early indeed in the morning, or not have advanced far on the Appian way; but it is yet more likely that he was fast asleep in his bed: but there is this objection to be made to the landscape, that though the day is breaking over the distant hills and pediment on the right hand, there must be another sun somewhere out of the picture on the left hand, since the cast shadows from St. Peter and the Saviour, fall directly to the right, which corresponds with the light and shade on their figures. This, however, may be a sort of miraculous left-handed anticipation of Campbell on "coming events." The difference is appropriate, or, as Mr. Cunningham would technically write—"in keeping;" since, as the announced event of the re-crucifixion, did not come, the shadows are here turned aside.

"The figure of St. Peter (says Mr. Ottley) is not of equal merit,"—meaning, to that of Jesus Christ. "Neither ought it to be so: the principal part of every picture, should be, in all respects, the best part. We would allow, however, that his right foot came a little too low in the picture, if—as Mr. Cunningham has well conjectured—he might not be supposed to be about to kneel, or, at least, to bow the knee. His marvelling looks, and held-up hand, testify the impression made upon him."

Yes. This latter is also a just remark. There is a fine expression of surprise, on the part of St. Peter; he is clad in blue and dark yellow draperies; and the all-important keys hang from his girdle.

Christ is bearing a cross; so that nothing but executioners, shall, on his arrival at Rome, be wanting to the accomplishment of his projected crucifixion, as contemplated by the author of this impious legend. —Impious legend, we call it: for is there not impiety in imputing to Divine natures, petty and deceptive tricks, such as a moral man ought to eschew and be ashamed of; independently of their being so very far beneath Almighty power and wisdom? Genuine believers are more tenacious of truth; and the truths of Christianity afford no fitting foundation for either fable or falsehood.

A red drapery falls backward from the shoulders of the Saviour, in well composed folds, so as to give great effect to a figure which justifies all that Mr. Ottery has affirmed of it; and—to accord with his supposed, or fabled, declaration, that he was going to Rome, in order to endure a second crucifixion, as a stimulating example to his timid, faithless, and reproachable, disciples, he points toward that metropolis. With the above exception, as to the morning light, the story is well told, although it was far from well to tell so improbable, so indecorous a story.

Mr. Allan Cunningham, however, is of a different opinion. We regret our frequent critical disagreement with this gentleman, respecting pictures: but as we always submit the reasons of our difference, the disinterested sincerity of our principle, must needs appear; and obtain, as we trust, due credit for the reluctance with which this part of a public duty is performed. Mr. C. says, “the legend is a very beautiful one!” How can we feel less than surprise, that he should discern beauty, in a legend which degrades Omnipotence to the devising of a fallacious

contrivance? It is beautiful, he says, because "it is in keeping with the timid character of Saint Peter, and serviceable to the church of Rome."

Let due credit be awarded to our contemporary for his liberality toward the church of Rome. We shall not quarrel with him on that score, further than the sentiment may warp his discernment of beauty. But ~~we, nevertheless~~, say, that because it is in keeping with the timid character of him who denied his discipleship, it is *not* beautiful. It is (simply) *in accordance* with that dastardly timidity; as one sin, or peccadillo, may be with another: but, therefore, possesses *no beauty*. Nothing can be beautiful that ~~we do not love~~: and if our contemporary were to acknowledge—were ~~such a thing~~ possible as for him to acknowledge that he loves, Peter's cowardly denial, and his faithless fear of sinking in the sea, he would assuredly find no sympathy.

The legendary fiction before us, has the less pretension to moral beauty, inasmuch as it is quite out of harmony with the truth, dignity, undissembling simplicity, and singleness of Christianity. Neither can it be creditable, or serviceable, to the church of Rome, that its first bishop, (one of the twelve apostles too) should have proved so feeble in faith as to think of saving his—bacon, we will not write; and request the reader not to think of such a thing; lest we be suspected of levity upon a serious occasion. But—Rome would surely disclaim the serviceableness which Mr. C. would extract from the circumstance of its first bishop having proved so feeble in faith, as to think of saving either soul or body, by flight, when called to those honours of martyrdom, which were, by other Catholics, regarded but as an immortal *birth*!

We look at a picture through its frame, as an antique drama through its proscenium, or at a portion of nature through a window, or other aperture—with this difference, however, that in looking at Nature we *can only* regard time present : whereas in the dramatic picture, we, in imagination, transport our minds back to the time represented ; and in looking at and appreciating a painting by any of those masters

——“ who, in days of yore,
The crown of art with greatest honour wore,”

we have further to take into the critical account, the sympathies which then prevailed, concerning both the art and its subject.

In deciding, therefore, on the moral, or religious, propriety of the conduct of an apostle of Christ (whom, be it remembered, an angel, bright with celestial glory, had released from prison) in absconding from the honours of dying with holy Stephen for the faith—we are to consider that those whom Caracci addressed, had faith in the transcendental merits of martyrdom, regarding it as the heroism of temporal existence, as a crowning pledge of sincerity, and the very first of Christian virtues.

The Apparition of Jesus Christ is here introduced as bearing his cross ; and his head is surrounded by that coronet of thorns which was placed there in mockery of his regal title, though he had repeatedly declared, that his kingdom was not of this world. It is, moreover, encircled with the customary saintly halo of holiness. So that—in the way of human contrivance—all seems prepared and ready for the reenactment of the redeeming, or reprehending, catastrophe.

The body and limbs of the Saviour are very carefully delineated, without anatomical ostentation, and are finely coloured, the warmer lights melting into the pearly grey half tints and shadows, with exemplary felicity of blandishment; as if, in both respects, the most select living models had been consulted, and the antique also had been duly regarded. The light, fading from the thorax downward, is graduated with masterly skill. It is the straight, Grecian-nosed, Christ,—which sinks the Hebrew character that might be thought to appertain to a descendant of David, in its aspirations after purer form,—to whom we are here introduced. It is, in short, a modification of that head which the Caracci were the first to adopt, with refinement, from Da Vinci and Coreggio—perhaps, on the whole, the best character for a Jesus Christ that has yet been painted; tempering the majesty which must be regarded as inseparable from the Son of God, and second personage of the Trinity, with the humility of the son of Mary of Nazareth: the meek Lamb who was led to slaughter, with the sublimity of the Saviour of the world! It is, in fact, with some variation of view, the same countenance of which we have so fine an etching from the hand of Annibale himself, where the suffering, but Divine Majesty, is placed in most pathetic apposition to brutal scoffers—a small print, but one of the most affecting in the world! Canova appears to have thought thus, for his head of Jesus Christ is evidently studied from that of the Caraccii; or, more strictly speaking, that of Coreggio.

This picture once adorned an apartment of the Prince Aldobrandini, in the Borghese Palace.

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they are but as trifles, when compared with the poetic, and almost celestial, charm, that hallows the chaste innocence and beauty of the Susanna, which is of the very essence of the kind of excellence of which this fine subject for a picture, is susceptible. As we stand before it, the very music of the painter's art, seems breathing around us.

In writing the above remarks, I have been—I know not whether the reader will esteem it abstemious, scrupulously squeamish—or what; and have some little fear, that he will think I have been this at his expense; when I confess that—though urged—I would not look at what Hazlitt has left us concerning this fine picture, till I had first embodied, and given local habitation to, my own observations and feelings on the subject. I fancied they would thus be more genuine, though they should prove less attractive.—And now that I have perused Hazlitt, I so nearly repent me of the forbearance, and am yet so reluctant to cancel what I have written, that I shall—somewhat unmercifully, I own—throw the indulgent reader upon the horns of my dilemma, and myself upon his indulgence, by inserting rather a copious, but to my mind (although I do not on every point, coincide with him) delightful, extract from this fervid and susceptible writer. I give timely, if not temerarious, notice, however, that I shall finally hope to persuade the reader that all this discussion is for his benefit. Hazlitt says—

“We sometimes, in viewing a celebrated collection, meet with an old favourite—a *first love* in such matters, that we have not seen for many years, which greatly enhances the delight. We have, perhaps, pampered our imaginations with it all that time; its

charms have sunk deep into our minds; we wish to see it once more, that we may confirm our judgment and renew our vows. The *Susanna and the Elders*, at Mr. Angerstein's, was one of those that came upon us under these circumstances. We had seen it formerly, among other visions of our youth, in the Orleans collection—where we used to go and look at it by the hour together, till our hearts thrilled with its beauty, and our eyes were filled with tears. How often had we thought of it since; how often spoken of it! There it was, still the same lovely phantom as ever—not as when Rousseau met Madame de Warens, after a lapse of twenty years, who was grown old and wrinkled—but as if the young Jewish beauty had been just surprised in that unguarded spot—crouching down in one corner of the picture, the face turned back, with a mingled expression of terror, shame, and unconquerable sweetness, and the whole figure shrinking into itself, with bewitching grace and modesty! It is by Lodovico Caracci, and is worthy of his name, from its truth and purity of design, its expression, and its mellow depth of tone. Of the *Elders*, one is represented in the attitude of advancing towards her, while the other beckons her to rise. We know of no painter who could have improved upon the *Susanna*, except Coreggio, who, with all his capricious blandishments, and wreathed angelic smiles, would hardly have given the same natural, unaffected grace, the same perfect womanhood."

The differences here of susceptibility and of opinion, between two public writers, both men of taste, learning, and of some experience in the Art, will not escape

the critical reader, or even the tyro in matters of taste. To the latter it may constitute, no uninstruc-tive lesson. According to Ottley, "the head of the female is *deficient in expression*:" according to Hazlitt, it has "*a mingled expression of terror, shame, and unconquerable sweetness*." Excepting for the old and well-founded adage, it must needs appear

"Strange that such difference *should be*."

But anon, comes a third critic, who wishes also to be descriptive and explanatory, (as is stated in his title-page :) And what does he say? Why, he says, that the innocence of Susanna is too pure for her to be conscious of the full extent of her danger; and that this innocent purity, with its concomitant modesty, combined with a certain individual peculiarity, constitutes the real charm, and the just adaptation of this fine female countenance.

Are these mental impressions reconcilable? Not quite, perhaps. But we may remark, that Mr. Ottley has not said that the head of Sussanna is deficient in *character*; and as the *expression* of terror, if it be there at all, is but just faintly dawning, quite in its incipency, and amounting to scarcely more than apprehensiveness; here is—if we grant (as, with sound critical philosophy on our side, we surely may) that Hazlitt has set down that "*unconquerable sweetness*" to the account of *expression*, which properly belongs to *character*.—Here is, we say, in this case, a point of approximation between the three opinions, which may perhaps fall in with that of the reader; perhaps, also, with the intention of Lodovico Caracci. There is something, too, calling for allowance, in

Hazlitt's "first love." The peculiar character of this fine female countenance, has fallen in with *his* feelings of the beautiful, though not with Mr. Ottley's.

Of Lodovico's picture, no more at present : but we shall conclude this article with a little plain speaking, which will, perhaps, be endeavoured to be canted into *personality*—that seems to be the conventional stigma, or brand, that is just now employed against those who call down deserved blame upon the vocabulary ignoramuses, with whose unsound pretensions we conceive it to be part of our public duty not to seem to acquiesce, but rather to treat, here and there, with a little honest exposure : we say here and there—for to have followed them through the National Gallery, wherever they have mistated facts, or set forth blunders as criticism, would more than have filled our book.

Mr. Ottley, as we have ventured to notice above, has totally mistaken the painter's choice of moment ; and into this error, and into the mistake of blue for green drapery—as into that of Bethany for Jerusalem in del Piombo's picture—has Mr. Valpy's apothecary, most punctually followed his physician's prescription, though without acknowledgment, having shown merely the *finesse* of clothing some of Mr. Ottley's ideas in other words. His affectation of wonder at the comparative circumscription of the powers of modern artists,—whom no person not grossly deficient in observation, as well as reflection, would thus indiscriminately mass together—comes with peculiar grace, and extraordinary brilliancy of effect, to be sure, after such palpable displays of the hollowness of his own critical craft ; and then, as if to clinch his anonymous carelessness and incom-

petency, immediately follows—as information given to the public—the fib, that “Raphael died at thirty-three,” when it has been so often repeated that he lived to be thirty-seven.

The Susanna was one of Mr. Angerstein’s pictures, and, as we have intimated above, was formerly in the Orleans collection.

ST. PETER AND THE APPARITION OF CHRIST.

ANNIBALE CARACCI.

THIS is not a scriptural subject, but a depicted tradition, or legend, of the Romish church. Peter, says the Catholic legend, had escaped from Rome, in order to save himself from impending martyrdom, and was hurrying along the Appian way, when he was met by his master, bearing his cross. “*Lord! where goest thou?*” inquired the surprised saint: to which the Saviour replied, that he was going to Rome, to be crucified a second time, finding his disciples feared to attest the truth of his mission with their blood.

Mr. Ottley says, “This picture is one of the most studied and highly finished performances of Annibale; and is especially admirable for the consummate skill displayed by him in the foreshortened figure of Christ; which has been long considered as one of the most perfect specimens of the kind, and almost seems to walk out of the canvass; an effect, which is not more the result of the correctness of that figure in respect of outline and lineal perspective, than of the judicious arrangement of its lights and shadows. The figure

of St. Peter is not of equal merit. The landscape in the back-ground is beautiful."

The landscape is good, and shows that St. Peter must have stolen away from Rome very early indeed in the morning, or not have advanced far on the Appian way; but it is yet more likely that he was fast asleep in his bed: but there is this objection to be made to the landscape, that though the day is breaking over the distant hills and pediment on the right hand, there must be another sun somewhere out of the picture on the left hand, since the cast shadows from St. Peter and the Saviour, fall directly to the right, which corresponds with the light and shade on their figures. This, however, may be a sort of miraculous left-handed anticipation of Campbell on "coming events." The difference is appropriate, or, as Mr. Cunningham would technically write—"in keeping;" since, as the announced event of the re-crucifixion, did not come, the shadows are here turned aside.

"The figure of St. Peter (says Mr. Otley) is not of equal merit,"—meaning, to that of Jesus Christ. "Neither ought it to be so: the principal part of every picture, should be, in all respects, the best part. We would allow, however, that his right foot came a little too low in the picture, if—as Mr. Cunningham has well conjectured—he might not be supposed to be about to kneel, or, at least, to bow the knee. His marvelling looks, and held-up hand, testify the impression made upon him."

Yes. This latter is also a just remark. There is a fine expression of surprise, on the part of St. Peter; he is clad in blue and dark yellow draperies; and the all-important keys hang from his girdle.

presume to think) rather less, than his accustomed ability. We say this, chiefly on account of those concluding and important comments, on its merits, or demerit, in which it is our lot to differ from that gentleman—though not without final hope of reconciliation.

“The subject (he says) is here represented with less violation of decency [here is no violation of decency at all, that we can perceive, on the part of the painter] than is commonly the case. The upper part of the body of Susanna only, is naked; the rest of her figure being enveloped in the ample folds of a dark green [blue] drapery. One of the Elders leans forward, and appears to *remonstrate* with her, using arts of *persuasion*; whilst his companion behind, seems alarmed at her *cries for help*, and already determined upon REVENGE. This picture is painted with force of effect, and at the same time is highly studied in the parts. *We are obliged to add, however, that the head of the female is deficient in expression.*”

But should not Mr. Ottley have reflected that *remonstrance*, and *persuasion*, are such very different things, that if the old sinner be remonstrating, he cannot be using arts of persuasion; and if he be using arts of persuasion, he cannot be remonstrating? Again, if his companion behind him were alarmed at the cries of Susanna for help, and were determined upon revenge, he would not be, as we here see him, with coarse, vulgar hope, and desire, in his looks, and in the act of solicitation.

But the truth is—at least according to our perception—that Susanna has *not* yet cried for help. Mr. Ottley has entirely mistaken the painter's point of time. The Elders have but just approached their lovely victim,

and solicitation, and entreaty, is all they *yet* think of. Revenge is, as yet, *quite* out of the question.

Mr. Ottley has felt obliged to add, that the "*head of the female is deficient in expression.*" This is what we chiefly regret. Does it mean that Susanna appears not sufficiently to dread the peril she is in? Or, not sufficiently to resent the affront? Or, what else does it mean?

Happily for the lords of the creation, and—we may add, the ladies too—Nature does not appear to have intended that men should view the same female countenance, with precisely the same sentiments, or we should be far more quarrelsome than we are, concerning fine female faces. There is certainly something very peculiar in this head of the chaste Susanna, and it may have happened that this peculiarity has not accorded with Mr. Ottley's taste for female beauty. There is *peculiarity* in every man's taste, as in every woman's character of countenance, and it is the sympathy, or harmony, between these, that excites love or pity, and on which is founded, the adage that "Men differ in their tastes," as well as Plato's interesting androgynous fable: and when Milton wishes to interest us in favour of his Eve, he informs us, that Adam beheld

"Beauty, which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth *peculiar* graces."

But for such considerations as these, it would be painful to differ from a gentleman of Mr. Ottley's reputation for critical taste in pictures, so entirely as, at first, we must appear to do on the present occasion. Yet we may not here dissemble our feeling, that the seeming incapability, or incompetence, of resentment

effected that Latin version of the Old Testament, which is since canonically adopted by the Catholic church, and is commonly distinguished by the appellation of "The Vulgate."

Dominichino has depicted the holy hermit, seated within this rocky retirement, engaged in his pious labours, with his books and antique scrolls of reference, open before him. His limbs are of Herculean mould, and are ably drawn; his figure bearing some (though not very near) resemblance to that of the celebrated statue of Moses, from the chisel of Michael Angelo. The beard of Saint Jerome is abundant and curling, and his countenance characteristically thoughtful and austere. He has evidently been studying the bible—a large book with clasps lying open before him, and a more antique volume, or scroll, beneath it. It is obvious that he has arrived at some recondite or mysterious passage. While his left hand is spread out over one page of his bible, the forefinger of his right rests on a particular word or text, over which we are led to suppose that the holy student has been pondering, when the celestial visitor—just when he is wanted—appears to expound it, suspended by his forth-spread wings, although within the cavern.

The divine messenger points upward, denoting that his mission, or the exposition which he brings, is from above: meanwhile his left hand indicates expostulation, seeming as if he would correct Jerome's own sense or construction of the text before him, by a sense more accurate and celestial, or prophetic.

That an angel should have assisted the saint, in such pious and profound studies, will surprise no good Catholic. But the figure of Dominichino's

angel is somewhat heavy, particularly his arms : his complexion is delicate, as it doubtless should be, when compared with the ruddy robustness of that of the enduring mortal ; and his light crimson drapery, while it plays agreeably round his figure, seems to partake of his floating motion.

There is a mountain eastward of Jerusalem, which, though not very lofty, the fathers of the church have designated " the mountain of temptation," in order to make it appear in topographical accordance with St. Luke's account of the temptation of Jesus Christ in the wilderness. Several oriental travellers mention this mountain, in which caverns, which were formerly tenanted by hermits, are scooped out of the rock, and, as we have related in our account of Parmegiano's Vision of St. Jerome, tradition assigns one of these caves as having been the scene of the occasional seclusion of this holy student. Yet we can scarcely suppose Dominichino to have been thoroughly acquainted with this topographical locality, because these cells are near the summit of the mountain—a circumstance which our painter has not contemplated, as is clear from the lowness of his horizon. A glimpse of the river Jordan, and some distant woodland, are seen through the mouth of the cave ; but this distance wants air and art, as most distances do that were painted before the time of Claude of Lorraine. In other respects, the effect of the chiaroscuro, though somewhat liney and cutting, is tolerably broad and impressive.

The cavern hermitage itself—of some dark brown mineral—is formless, excepting where its entrance, fringed with foliage, relieves, somewhat harshly, from

the sky and distance. But those who are not versed in the legendary history of the Catholic saints, will probably expect some information concerning a certain lion who, in the present picture, makes his (not very formidable) appearance, crouching near the feet of the holy student; and is among painters almost as invariable a companion of St. Jerome, as the cherubic figures of Ezekiel are of the four evangelists; which concomitancy, has led the artist into a little chronological mistake, as we shall presently have the honour of explaining.

But as facts of this extraordinary nature seem to call for antique witnesses, and are scarcely fit to be related in ordinary language, we purpose—as the very best authority we are able to adduce—to set before our readers the very words of the old black-letter legend, where they lead us not too far into prolixity; where they do, we compress and abbreviate.

And 1st, we must apprize them that it is by that pictorial license, which we have already explained, that St. Jerome's lion appears within the Syrian cavern; for the legend informs us that, after the saint had passed four years in this desert, partly in scriptural meditations, and partly in ascetic penance, till he was conscientiously satisfied

“ That the foul deeds done in his youthful days
Were *starved* and *scourged* away”—

he returned to “ the towne of Bethlehem, and, as a wyse and a prudente beest, he offred hymselfe to abyde by the crybbe of our Lorde;” which is to say, that he became the inmate of the monastery which the

lady Paula was probably building while Jerome sojourned in the Syrian desert: but he nevertheless continued to mortify the sinful lusts of the flesh, by fasting and prayer, and continued also his literary studies.

And it was *after* this removal that, "On a day towards eventide, Jerome sate with his brethren to hear the holy lessons, when a lion came halting suddenly into the monastery. And when the brethren saw him, anon they fled; but Jerome came against him as he should come against his guest [with an air of welcome], and the lion showed to him his swelled and wounded foot. Then he called back his brethren, and commanded them to wash the lion's foot and search for the wound: when they discovered that 'the plante of the fote of the lyon was sore hurte and prycked with a thorne.' The saint then applied medicaments, healed the wound, and the lion abode ever after at the monastery. The holy man discerned that God had sent the lion to them, not only for the recovery of his foot, but for their profit; and soon, with the consent of his brethren, Jerome appointed the noble quadruped to the office of conducting an ass, which brought home wood, to and from his pasture. And the lion did that which he was commanded, conducting the ass as an herdsman would, and was to him a sure keeper and defender; and regularly at an accustomed hour the lion, as well as the ass, came to his refecton."

But miracles, like misfortunes, seldom come alone. It happened on a time that the lion slept while the ass was feeding in his pasture, when certain merchants, passing by with camels, stole him and led

him away. And when the lion awoke, but found not his companion, he returned groaning to the monastery. He durst not come in; but abode at the gate of the church: and when the monks saw him late in the day, and without the ass, they supposed that by constraint of hunger, or Satan, he had violated their hospitality by devouring the ass, and, instead of giving him his accustomed portion of food, they bade him go eat his leavings: yet, being somewhat sceptical, or modest, concerning their own divinings, they went to the pasture, but found nothing.

Their superior then instructed his monastic brethren to enjoin and to teach the lion to become a beast of burthen, which he obediently did, and was regularly installed in the office of the ass, and brought home their fuel; but on a certain day, when he went forth in the performance of this duty, he accidentally saw the thievish merchants, and the ass heading their procession of camels, when, recognising his old companion, he ran at the merchants, roaring so terribly that they fled; and the lion then constrained the ass and camels to proceed to the monastery; where, being arrived, he ran joyously and kneeled down before each of their brethren, fawning, as it were, to ask pardon for his former trespass. Jerome then ordered the necessary preparations to be made for the reception of guests; when the merchants presently arriving, and requesting to speak with the abbot, they kneeled and implored pardon. The holy man commanded them to take their own goods, but in future to respect the property of others; and the affair ended with his accepting a certain measure of oil—the commodity

in which they trafficked—and an engagement on their part to bring every year a similar measure of oil to the monastery of St. Jerome.

This picture also formerly adorned an apartment of the Prince Aldobrandini in the Borghese palace, and subsequently came into the Carr Collection.

ERMINIA'S INTERVIEW WITH THE SHEPHERD.

DOMINICHINO.

SOME slight acquaintance, at least with a few preceding circumstances as detailed in the "Jerusalem Delivered" of Torquato Tasso, is indispensable to the true understanding of this well studied and successful work from the pencil of Dominichino. These we shall proceed to relate.

Erminia, the heroine of the picture, had from a lofty turret within the beleaguered city of Jerusalem beheld the valorous Christian knight Tancred, with whom she was deeply in love, wounded in fierce conflict with a gigantic Paynim chief. Her apprehensions were strongly excited; and, disguised in the armour of her heroic friend Clorinda, she romantically stole forth at midnight, very slenderly attended, and on horseback, for the purpose of medicating his wounds and soothing his sufferings; but certain sentinels of the Christian camp, espying her by moonlight, her purpose was frustrated. Kept at full speed for the remainder of the night, and the whole of the succeeding day, she outstripped her pursuers, and riding onward without retrospection, she at length—overcome by weariness and exhaustion—dismounted

her war-steed, and sunk to sleep, far from the sacred city; awakening the next day only to indulge in bitter lamentations at her untoward fate.

Tasso and Dominichino here take up the story, which, as rendered from the Italian with beautiful fidelity, by friend Wiffen, proceeds as follows—

“ Her plaints were silenced by shrill music, sent
As from a rural pipe; such sounds as cheer
The Syrian shepherd in his summer tent,
And mix’d with past’ral accents rude but clear.
She rose, and gently, guided by her ear,
Came where an old man, on a rising ground,
In the fresh shade, his white flocks feeding near
Twig baskets wove; and listen’d to the sound
Trill’d by three blooming boys, who sat disporting round.

“ These, at the shining of her silver arms,
Were seized at once with wonder and despair;
But sweet Erminia sooth’d their vain alarms,
Discovering her dove’s eyes and golden hair.
Follow, she said, dear innocents, the care
Of Heaven, your fanciful employ;
For the so formidable arms I bear,
No cruel warfare bring, nor harsh annoy
To your engaging tasks, to your sweet songs of joy.”

Dominichino has thoroughly entered into the poetic interest of the part of Erminia’s history which he here undertakes to illustrate. The princess has put aside the fears of the pastoral group, by doffing her helmet; and while her luxuriant hair is abandoned to the influence of the passing gale, is felicitating the venerable shepherd on his domestic happiness. A white mantle with brodered pattern-work, fastened by a ruby brooch, has been thrown gracefully over the blue cuirass of Clorinda, whose tigress-crested helmet and shield lie on the ground, and her war-steed fastened

to a tree at a little distance. The old shepherd is robust, rustic, grey-headed, and venerably bearded, seated on a rocky bank, and primitively clad in the skin of some animal, over which a home-spun red cloak, or mantle, is loosely thrown; a staff, or pastoral crook, is beside him, leaning against the bank; his sheep are massed into a flock, and penned at a short distance beyond. Suddenly interrupted at his basket-making occupation, his surprise seems yielding to complacency at the melodious sound and friendly accents of the damsel's voice.

His three boys are behind their father, gracefully grouped in various infantile and youthful attitudes; to their fear, has succeeded delight at the declarations and beauty of the disguised youthful warrior, and at the discovery that, cloaked under the semblance of war, they behold and experience the reality of peace and good will. One of his sons has the syrinx, or pastoral reed-pipes of the classic ages; another the pipe and tabor, from which they suspend their performance as Erminia speaks; the third is a supposed singer, who exhibits signs of sympathetic attraction toward the stranger, and seems as if he wanted only wings to fly to her arms. They are charming little fellows, and, as well as the old shepherd, seem of the golden age. The disguised princess, characterised by serene innocence and youthful beauty, mildly perceives that she has attained the welcome which she sought.

The composition of the landscape, being in a taste of unpretending simplicity, accords with that of the figures. A few trees, not remarkable for growth or grandeur, are scattered about the scene. Clouds are breaking above. The river Jordan—mentioned in

the poem—with a gently murmuring fall near the mid-ground, winds through an extensive landscape, which is terminated by the far off blue mountains of Carmel and Hebron—judging by the distance which Erminia must have ridden.

The picture is executed with a degree of boldness and breadth of handling well suited to its rather large dimensions; yet—in the parts requiring such treatment—with delicacy adapted to the feminine and infantile forms of which it mainly consists. There is a fine frank sincerity, blended with much beauty and mental purity, in the speaking face and corresponding action of Erminia. Like the hospitable old man and boys, her figure and deportment breathe of the golden age, before crime had corrupted the earth; appearing as if affliction could have no business there, and might not presume to approach so much purity and virtue. The vigorous limbs of the patriarchal shepherd, are ably delineated; and the differences between infancy, the prime of youth and beauty, and hale and unimpaired old age, are well discriminated, both in the forms and complexions of the *dramatis personæ*. The extremities too of the little chubby musicians, as well as those of the lovely Erminia, are delicately formed and ably pencilled. The former are of the Giorgione and Titian race, and all appear

“ — redolent of joy and youth :
The weary soul they seem to sooth.”

Concerning the chiar-oscuro :—Erminia receives the brightest light—with every propriety; but the broadest mass is distributed on the shepherd and the group of children. We do not think the picture has

yet been advantageously hung, or has had its due share of public, English, admiration. Truth to say, it is rather less attractive at the first glance than it ought to be, from its having, as we suspect, faded a little in its colour—although Dominichino is *generally* too cool for the climates he represents. Whether faded or not, it wants a little more *geniality*. It looks rather too cold for the warm latitude of the Land of Promise just before the sun's arrival at his solstitial station; or for the enjoyment of the spontaneous out of door happiness, which Tasso has here described. There is else nothing in the Gallery so patriarchal in its aspect, or which so successfully depicts the happy times when men grew old rather in rural recreation than in labour, and retained their health and strength to a late period of life, like this hospitable old Shepherd, addressed by Beauty and Innocence, and surrounded by his chubby piping-boys.

This Dominichino was transferred to the National Gallery with the rest of the Angerstein Collection.

AN ALLEGORY.

SIR PETER PAUL RUBENS.

I HAVE ventured to term this an Allegory;—perhaps a painted Lyric Ode, though more unusual, had been more pertinent, and not less well understood; for most readers are musical, and the present performance may, by an obvious analogy, be said to have a melodious tone. As we turn our attention towards it,

“ Joyous music seems to breathe,
Above—about,—or underneath;
Sent by some spirit to mortals good :”

And, like the poet, we seem under the agreeable influence of

“ — some mysterious dream,
— in aery stream
Of lively portraiture display'd :
Softly on our eyelids laid.”

The denomination, however, of the work may, should the reader so please, be, without inconvenience deferred till we have something like a tolerably firm feeling that we understand the thing to be denominated. It may be that, after all, our readers may choose to term this very remarkable work, *The Blessing of Rubens*.

And much does it grieve us here to be obliged to attack one of the tuneful Nine in the very outset of our speculation ; but we must need say, that History has been peculiarly ungrateful to her sister Muse of Painting. The latter is never more agreeably or more usefully employed than in the representation of historical transactions, or in the recommendation or enforcement of such truths as make us wiser or better : meanwhile, the former has disgracefully and shamefully, neglected to record the blessings and benefits which mankind have derived from the Arts and Sciences ; and while she has consigned these sober and important truths to casual tradition, and accidental and precarious contingency, has filled and besmeared her pages with bloody wars, political crimes, the pollutions of court intrigues, and the complications of crafty atrocity.

The present picture, from the pencil of Rubens, affords no impertinent instance of this ingratitude. One of the most urbane, and, to a philosophical mind, one of the most gratifying, events in the life of Charles the First—the only English king who

appears to have had any sound taste for the Fine Arts—and the event best calculated to have called forth—as no doubt it did, his patriotic sympathies—must have been his gracious acceptance from the hands of Sir P. P. Rubens, of the splendid picture here under our notice of “Peace and War,” or, which has been thus misnamed: and doubtless one of the most pleasurable periods in the life of this great artist—whose life must have abounded in joyous incidents, to which those of artists in general afford but a dismal contrast—must have been the time which he devoted to the conception and execution of a work performed under the exhilarating anticipation that a royal patron, competent to appreciate its merits, awaited its completion. Yet—alas! the sunny spot has been passed unheeded by Clarendon; by Hume; by Rapin; by Godwin; and even by Scott, though it was so well calculated to have formed a brilliant chapter in one of his romances of history. Meanwhile, the dark, dismal, and stormy passages of this eventful period, have been dwelt upon, and premiums have been held forth, and libraries have been ransacked and squeezed, in quest of that barbarous gratification which barbarians alone, or the most uncivilised portion of human nature, can enjoy.

Good sense, or even ordinary reflection, would teach us to suppose that History would gladly have availed herself of such an opportunity of redeeming human nature from the reproach of horrid delight, and would have rejoiced in the opportunity of contrasting her dark passages with a gleam of pleasureable sunshine. But, no: we merely gather from an obscure catalogue of King Charles’s collection, that the picture is therein mentioned as, “Peace and

Plenty, or an emblem of Peace and War, which Sir Peter Paul Rubens, when he was here, did paint, and presented it himself to the king." The picture was a present from the painter to King Charles : worthy of both. No king has at any other time, as far as our historical knowledge extends, received from an artist a present so intrinsically valuable, so wisely intended, so well timed, and which therefore should have been—and presumptively was—so pre-eminently gratifying to the receiver. Yet the haughty folly of Clio, or her high-priesthood, or their mean subserviency to the patrons and the purposes of battle, massacre, and oppression, have excluded it from her pages—But, never mind—"So much the rather, thou celestial light" of *Art*—

"Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
Purge and dispel."

Painting, under the hands of disinterested and high-minded professors, knows how to take a generous revenge, and will be even with Literature some of these days.

"Well-turned periods in eloquence, or harmony of numbers in poetry, (says Sir Joshua Reynolds,) which are in those arts, what colouring is in painting, however highly we may esteem them, can never be considered as of equal importance with the art of unfolding truths that are useful to mankind, and which make us better or wiser." In such rare works as the present, we have them *both* united. Here are the rich harmonies of splendid colour employed to unfold and enforce one of the most useful truths that could adorn a palace or a senate-house—namely, the

return of those natural blessings of peace and prosperity, which is consequent to the cessation of war, and which is here combined with the prophetic, and not unreasonable, anticipation—at least the generous and earnest wish on the part of the painter, displayed with all the charms of art which the most exuberant fancy could lavish—that those social blessings may descend to posterity ; an appeal to paternal love, and philanthropy, (which includes patriotism,) at once forcible and just.

If the reception of such a performance must have been pleasurable to a tasteful and urbane prince, it cannot have been less exhilarating to the painter to have possessed the power of conceiving and executing such a work, in the anticipating consciousness, that it would be felt, understood, and graciously accepted. How “twice blessed” must have been both the giver and receiver of a present so truly royal ! For, be it observed, that *this* picture does not place before us one of those fulsome allegories which the pestiferous adulation which then infested the court of France, and had nearly spread through the rest of Europe, so imperiously exacted from every artist who came within the sphere of its attraction, but simply expresses the warm—the *disinterested*, wishes, on the part of the painter, (because he was of another country) for the future prosperity of his majesty the king of England’s reign ; and is, therefore, only like Rubens’ going up to court in a professional way—but in a way which appertains to no other profession—with an address of felicitation and good wishes, on the conclusion of an arduous and unprofitable war : *such* an address of felicitation, however, as no other man in the world could have indited. An occurrence so unique, so unprecedented, so very extraordinary,

was assuredly worthy of being recorded in letters of gold, or on a tablet of adamant; instead of which, we find it—not *recorded* at all? Yet the fact has come down to us. And what does this show? Why, that the grander operations of Art, like those of Nature, are records unto themselves. Records unto themselves are the grander operations of Nature, for those wondrous geological facts and phenomena, which have in our time been rendered manifest and intelligible, were neither known, nor was their existence even suspected, by Thales, by Pythagoras, by Socrates, by Aristotle, or by Pliny; which shows that the great goddess keeps a ledger of her own, and that infant man is but learning to decipher her mysterious characters.

This Allegory, from the pencil of Rubens, has been generally called "Peace and War;" but sometimes "Peace and Plenty;" either of which titles is mere dull prosing, and conveys no adequate idea of what is here depicted. Yet it is true, that a long and profitless war had been recently terminated at the era to which it has reference: Rubens himself, in his ambassadorial capacity, had contributed to the bringing about the auspicious conjuncture, by the opportune production of his credentials, when visited by the king at Whitehall, and had, in consequence, received at his majesty's hand the honour of knighthood: he might, therefore, with a knightly grace, superinduced on the soundest propriety, offer to his royal patron this splendid expression of his loyal and philosophical wishes as to coming events. True it is, those wishes were wofully disappointed, but were not the less laudable, or sincere, or worthy of being committed to canvas.

The work before us is then substantially—as we

proposed to term it in the beginning of our essay—a painted *Lyric ODE*; and, being so, partakes of the rapturous, or enthusiastic character of *such* productions; and such productions always abound with metaphor or allegory. Yet it has been criticised and commented upon, by far too much as if it were merely a painted *occurrence*, and were amenable to the same precise laws. Now, instead of being criticised as though it were painted from some passage in the history of Hume or of Rapin, it should be regarded as we would attend to a triumphal, or gratulatory, Ode of Pindar or of Gray. What would be thought of a cold-hearted critic presenting himself with his rule and compass and stop-watch, when a performance was to be recited, abounding in abrupt exultations, sudden transitions, and of a rapturous tone, such as Gray's

“Mighty victor! Mighty lord!
Low on his fun’ral couch he lies!
No tear to grace his obsequies.”

Or of the no less sublime stanza, beginning—

“Hark! his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hov’ring o’er,
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe”——

Should we be controverted here—Should it be said that Painting does not, or that Rubens did not, possess the power of raising our minds to the enthusiastic tone, the power of exciting which is willingly granted to the combined harmonies of poetry and music; that would be placing the question on new grounds. We should then have, either to produce

the present work, as a proof that superseded all further argument, or to inquire into the possible susceptibilities of our improved perceptions, and of the arts of exciting them. At present, we do not intend anything so metaphysically profound, as would be the latter inquiry.

We are here simply assuming that the florid fancy of Rubens, and the rich harmonies of his palette and pencils, did, and that such instruments, when guided by such intellects, do, possess this power over *congenial* and *susceptible* minds: or, at least, that it may be conceded to the generous endeavours of Rubens, upon a grand and heart-stirring occasion, like that which called forth his gratulations—the conclusion of a disastrous war in which Europe had been embroiled.

We are uncertain whether the armed female who appears in this composition, resting on a spear, be intended for Britannia or Minerva. Nor do we take blame on this score, or impute it to the painter. There is, or should be, a good deal of resemblance between these ideal personages; and if Painting should possess an intelligible art of identifying them, or of rendering such identity but probable, or conceivable—all the better for such an occasion as the present. When the spirits are raised to a rapturous tone, the judgment is not fastidiously nice. Grains and scruples are not brought forth, when a princely present is offered: when the intellect is delighted, the senses are acquiescent: their office was to introduce the grand and affecting sentiment. That office performed, they duteously fall back into their rank of subserviency.

The present performance is as if Rubens, rejoicing

in the accomplishment of a peace to which he had himself led the way in his diplomatic capacity, had taken a sheet of writing-paper, or rather his own pure mind, and after having inscribed there, some such gratulations as follow, had said to himself; Now will I express this in the language of my Art; and present it to the king. Those who please, may let off fire works, that sparkle and are gone; *my* good wishes shall take a more permanent character.

Behold! Britannia resumes her wisdom! War, Discord, and Malice (with her inflammatory breath), are driven from your majesty's councils and dominions! Public Felicity returns! Smiling Benevolence again sits enthroned! Zephyrus descends with the olive-crown and caduceus (emblems of peace and commercial prosperity). The all-bounteous Pan appears with the exhaustless horn of Amalthea; and is followed by Opulence, with her treasures. Music is in their train. Love ministers to Abundance. And the rising generation advance to partake of these blessings.—

“Thus painters write their *Odes* at Cos.”

When we reflect on the melancholy after occurrences of the reign of Charles, we perceive how much Rubens was mistaken, when he fancied himself prophetically anticipating so much royal and British prosperity. Yet his wishes were not the less generous and sincere; nor are they the less highly to be appreciated at this distance of time. As a philosophical artist, and as a sensible and benevolent man, Rubens is now entitled to more honour for the single work before us, than for the production of the whole Luxembourg gallery. Why such generous wishes, thus

becomingly manifested, were not more admired during the age of the artist; and why they have not been since understood; or, if understood, purposely misappreciated, at mind-stifling Genoa, where the picture has remained for the greater part of the interval between the age of Charles and the present, is easily perceived; but it would not now be easy to perceive why it should not, in the present age, be lifted into the height of estimation, to which it is honestly entitled, when its deserts are measured by the quantum of its intrinsic merits as a moral work of art.

In England, this picture was erroneously denominated "Peace and Plenty," and, "Peace and War:" at Genoa, it was not less erroneously styled "The Family of Rubens." But we have seen that there is no personification of Peace, or of Plenty, in the whole composition (for the horn of Amalthea, is, of course, not a personification, although it be a symbol); and, "The Family of Rubens" being, at the most, merely agents, from their having been *supposed* to have sat to the painter as models; it is an obvious, and a reprehensible, misnomer, to obtrude the name of the agents for that of the principals. But we shall presently show that this also is a mistake, and that the family of Rubens do not appear in the present picture.

In all human concerns, as the advancement of truth, is consequent to the recession of error, or falsehood; so is the advancement of good, on the removal of evil. And these must follow, as the day the night; moral good being the light of the intellectual world.

The work,—which we shall next proceed to describe more in detail,—is an *Allegory throughout*; and there-

fore in no degree liable to the critical objection which has been raised, and, perhaps, somewhat too much insisted on, of this painter's mingling allegorical, with real, personages; and christian, with heathen, emblems. Either Britannia, or the goddess of Wisdom—that goddess, whom alone of the celestial powers, Jove would entrust to wield his thunder—she from whom Painting herself derives her heavenly origin—is here driving from the scene the dark and hateful passions. Her right hand grasps her spear; but with a certain delicacy of advertence on the part of the artist—she is not using it offensively, but is only resting on it, as if it were a sceptre. *War* retires reluctantly, as if he dared not resist *Wisdom*; yet employs his shield, as if he still wished to shelter and protect *Discord*, with her extinguished torch. The figure of *Terror*, or it may be *Calumny*—ending downward in serpent trains, like the personified Sin of Milton—has sped away before, but turns her hideous face round to yell against *Minerva*—or *Minerva-Britannia*, as we have ventured to suggest.

The genius of Rubens was universal, and, as Lord Byron sings,

“ His Muse made increment of any thing,
From the high lyrical, to the low rational ;

we have pertinent examples of these varieties in the National Gallery. But, the subtler or more spiritualised art of the Painter, like that of the Poet, resides in his power of exciting, or awakening, congenial trains of ideas in the minds of the contemplative, tasteful, or susceptible; and not, as is frequently and vulgarly supposed, in merely addressing the optical sense, and imprisoning the fancy, with what is before

the eye; and these trains of ideas will vary, as the minds addressed, are more or less cultivated, or informed; or are lively, apprehensive, or dull. It is neither necessary, nor possible, that every spectator should feel, or understand, the same picture in all its parts alike, and with legal, or literal, precision. Do we not differ—do not even legislators and magistrates differ—concerning the true construction, even of acts of parliament? And, “Poetry, (said Cicero to a brother advocate) is not to be examined, like a witness at the bar.” Neither is allegoric painting to be thus scrupulously examined, or trammelled; or a unanimous result or verdict to be expected, as to all its details.

Some will, therefore, be led to think of the last mentioned figure, with fiery or pestiferous breath, and “which endeth foul in many a snaky fold; voluminous,” that it is intended for a baneful compound “of Envy, Hatred, Malice, and all uncharitableness,” such as ever attends on the hostility of rival nations.

With pictorial, as well as emblematic, propriety, this part of the Allegory is kept in shadow, and massed together, while a broad and brilliant light falls on the personification of *Benevolence*, or *Public Felicity*—a poetic creation of Rubens’ own, where he has lavished *his* best taste of female form, and his clear, and pulpy, and juicy, and palpitating flesh tints, and blessed us with a beautiful apparition! It is not denied that, with much of the vitality of female loveliness, here is a tendency to Flemish fulness. No pretensions are made to the immaculate purity of Raphael’s Madonnas or Galatea, which to Rubens might perhaps appear cold and passionless in their purity, and too unsusceptive of human emotion. The

present figure is eminently beautiful ! but it is terrestrial, and approachable, though beaming with more than mortal benevolence.

This benevolent goddess is represented shedding the milk of human kindness, while a thirsty soul of the budding generation—eager to partake of the maternal charity—is pressing toward the milky way. These are bold ideas for a painter to have conceived and adopted ; and which some critics might think were, either conventionally, or by their nature, restricted to the eloquence of poetry. But no such thing. Rubens is always eloquent ; always fearless ; often unprecedented ; and in the present instance, nobly vindicates his claim to the professorship of silent poesy. The species of painting of which so fine a specimen is before us, and in which the great Fleming so peculiarly excelled, partakes, like lyric poetry, of the nature of inspiration, in the rapturous style and ardent grace which it assumes. It cannot be permitted, in any respect, to drag on like cold and ordinary annals. It must seem to invent, and impart, and glow, as it proceeds.

Before the ample, and beneficent, and deific, female—adorned the most, though unadorned—which I (an humble translator, or expounder, of Rubens,) have adventured to term Public Felicity, the “all-bounteous Pan,” garlanded with ivy, and fresh from the orchard-forests of Hesperus, is pouring forth the contents of the fruitful horn of Amalthea ; and a happy, infantile, and adolescent, group, led on by *Love*, or perhaps by *Genius*, bearing his torch aloft, are made partakers of its delicious contents.

The artists of antiquity aptly symbolised Death,

by the extinction of a torch. The torch then, was their significant emblem of vitality. It is here borne aloft, and he who bears it with his right hand, employs the other in crowning with a flowery wreath, a lovely girl, who is just budding from adolescence toward puberty. But, as we have already intimated, we enter into no engagement to swear, in any court of law, or taste, that this crowning-figure is not intended for *Genius* with his lambent flame. Another cherubic, winged figure of fraternal *Love*, helps the interesting group of little ones who are approaching, to fruit from the cornucopia.

That states and empires have their periods of vicissitude and declension, and feel in their turns what distress and poverty are, every reader is sufficiently aware. The stormy politics of England in the sixteenth century, drove this fine Rubens into the then wealthy and prosperous port of Genoa. The Parliamentary "council of state," who possessed themselves of King Charles's pictures, sold it for one hundred pounds; through what subsequent agency it afterward journeyed to Genoa, we are unable to say; but, displayed on the walls of the superb palace of the Dorias, "whose merchants were princes of the earth," it was advantageously stationed there between the two fine landscapes from the same versatile pencil, of which, one (now in our national collection) became the property of Sir George Beaumont, and the other of Mr. Champernowne. But the star of Genoa has since declined far from its zenith; the commerce of England is again ascendant; and through the munificent enterprise of the late Marquis of Stafford, who purchased it at the price of four thousand

guineas*, and nobly presented it to the public—through this zeal and liberality, seconded by the steady views and good taste of the gentleman who has the care of the National and the Royal pictures, it is far within possibility, that the Rubenses may again be constellated, and shine, as they formerly shone from the walls of the Doria palace: all the three pictures being now in England.

Whilst it remained at Genoa, this piece was colloquially, but ignorantly, entitled “The Family of Rubens”—Lady Rubens having been reported, or assumed, to have sat for the Goddess of Benevolence, or personification of Public Felicity: whether erroneously, or truly, we know not: but if truly, Rubens is among the few men whose possession of such a wife would stultify envy itself. But, on this assumption appears to have been built another, which we shall show to have been entirely erroneous. The lady being supposed to be the wife, it was inferred that the children were the offspring, of the painter; and *hence* the dilletanti of Genoa, in their ignorance of English localities, scrupled not to misname the picture “The Family of Rubens;” and some of the English themselves, much less pardonably than the Italians, carelessly adopted the misnomer. Now these children (though, as we have already intimated, they do not here present themselves as portraits of individuals, but only as representatives of the rising gene-

* The difference between one hundred pounds and four thousand guineas, is no trifle. This instance, among many others, may serve to show that, while much pleasure and benefit are gained, no money is lost, by purchasing and possessing really first rate works of art.

ration) were actually painted—not from Rubens's, but—from those of *Sir Balthazar Gerbier*, a gentleman of the court of King Charles, with whom the artist was intimate, and who was much consulted by the king in matters of taste. There is a large picture of Sir Balthazar's family, by Rubens, now in the royal collection, wherein these handsome children re-appear, and we particularly notice here, the interesting girl with the large and lovely dark eyes, who is introduced into both pictures, in nearly the same view of her face and figure, and with something of that peculiar look of virgin timidity, which is so admirable! and which appears to have interested the painter so powerfully, that there are other portraits from his hand, extant, in other collections, of this charming girl. These facts (as we shall venture to state) are beyond all further question, as any person admitted to a view of the king's pictures may easily convince himself.

Need we repeat, that this lovely group, not being introduced as portraits, are not to be so regarded, but merely as denoting that the blessings which Deific power, as here depicted, is producing, will descend to *posterity*.

Regarding the picture as a manifestation of the peculiar and delightful mode in which Sir Peter felt himself privileged to offer his gratulations on the conclusion of war; to invoke, and to declare that he so invoked—the blessing of Heaven, on the future reign of his patron Charles, the meaning of, this beautiful group, or the painted wish expressed by it, is simply, that *posterity* shall enjoy the abundance that is pouring forth,

For the above reasons, we would respectfully suggest, that *The Blessing of Rubens*, would be a more fitting denomination for this fine performance, than either of those by which it has been hitherto known:—(namely, “The Family of Rubens,” “Peace and War,” or “Peace and Plenty:”) but upon this point, let every reader please himself. Our main object is, that the picture should be rightly understood: and though we purposed to be descriptive, explanatory, and critical, we are under no engagement, and entertain no wish, to confer names, further than a correct name may conduce to a right conception of the thing denominated.

The sylvan bearer of the cornucopia, is followed by a female figure, whose finely turned back is toward the spectator. The dorsal muscles are delicately marked, and the lower part of her figure is partially covered with a brodered robe, loosely thrown over it. This female is bringing superbly embossed goblets, wreaths of pearl, and other treasures, in a golden charger; and she appears to personify *Opulence*, (riches, or mercantile prosperity.) Beyond her, *Music* is joyously smiting her tambourine, with an air something between that of a Bacchante and the classic muse Euterpe.

The genial and gratifying light, and warm colour, which catches on these sub-deities, and which Rubens so well knew how to spread, falls broadly on the figure of Benevolence, or Public Felicity; and is conducted onward, with great address, to its other principal objects—namely, the youthful group, where it emphatically rekindles, with great advantage to the general effect. As a picture, and independently of

the philanthropic trains of ideas with which it is associated, the whole is magnificently rich.

The colours and the undulating form of a young leopard, who, harmless

“ and playful as the sportive kitten,”

lies on his back, near the fore-ground, contributes not a little to this variegated richness. He has evidently come from the garden of Hesperus, or some such golden orchard, with Pan (or Sylvan) and the horn of Amalthea, teeming with its delicious luxuries; and when taken with the group of children near him, will powerfully remind the reader of certain congenial passages in the Messiah of Pope. Indeed, the whole picture—“ rapt into future times,” is in full harmony with the tenour of that poem: but we more particularly allude to the stanzas—

“ All crimes shall cease, and ancient fraud shall fail !
 Returning Justice lift aloft her scale.
 See ! Nature hastes her earliest wreaths to bring,
 With all the incense of the breathing Spring :
 No more shall nation against nation rise,
 Nor ardent warriors meet with hateful eyes ;
 Nor fields with gleaming steel be cover'd o'er ;
 The brazen trumpet kindle rage no more :

* * * * *

Then palaces shall rise : the joyful son
 Shall finish what his shortliv'd sire begun ;
 The lambs with wolves shall graze the verdant mead,
 And boys in flow'ry bands the tiger lead.”

The prototype of both Pope and Rubens was doubtless that prophecy of Isaiah, wherein he predicts that “ the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the

leopard shall lie down with the kid," &c. "and a little child shall lead them."

But, beside the general congeniality, or agreement, which we have noticed between the prophet, the poet, and the painter, Rubens has introduced certain particular touches of nature, and of analogical accompaniment of a minor kind, which, when the first pleasurable tumult into which fancy is thrown by an introduction to this picture, has somewhat subsided, will steal agreeably on the attention. Among them, the bland little Zephyrus, or Halcyon, who has brought the olive-wreath, and floats sportfully in the air; and, that notwithstanding the leopard is playful and apparently harmless, our favourite little adolescent girl cannot entirely divest herself of a certain feminine timidity—an endearing, virgin apprehensiveness, which sits on her gracefully, and is most happily depicted. We may be quite sure that the artist caught this from nature. There is indeed a pervading modesty and artlessness about the whole of this infantile group, that is extremely interesting in itself, and intelligibly allegorical in its meaning; for the transmission of blessings such as are here invoked or anticipated by this accomplished painter, to an innocent and modest offspring, affects us more poetically, as well as more honourably and more profoundly, than would the immediate personal expectation, or self-enjoyment, of those same blessings;—Ah! but there is a *vis inertia* here. How shall we avoid to feel and reflect on what *has* resulted to England instead of these invoked blessings? How shall we avoid to think of those hell-principled national debts that have resulted from the wars in which our country, since the age of Rubens and of Charles, has

unhappily been engaged, instead of the halcyon days of happiness with which the lyric painter would have blessed us?

As, after temporarily wearing green glasses, all objects for a while appear tinged with red; and as, after the intense inspection of any vivid colour, our optic nerves are for a time affected, or haunted as it were, with a spectrum of the antagonist tint; so do we find our minds affected, after permitting imagination to be soothed with this picture. The red antagonist tint is excited. We incontinently think of what England has really inherited, instead of the blessings invoked by Rubens. The picture of anticipated national happiness, introduces the baleful Walpole spectrum of national debt, which during the age of this great artist was unknown, and had not even been thought of.

Rubens lived in the cruel age of thumb-screws, it is true; but before the invention of this ingenious purse-and-heart-screw. Were he now to reappear, and paint for us of "this enlightened age"—(as it calls itself)—a second edition of his generous wishes, what a horrible infanticidal monster he would have to depict among his retreating demons! or what a Herculean labour for his Britannia, or goddess of Wisdom, to encounter!—But it is most likely that his alarmed attention would avert itself from the task, and that, with Gray, he would write on his canvas—

"Visions of GLORY!—spare my aching sight!
Ye unborn ages, rush not on my soul!"

A FLEMISH LANDSCAPE AND FIGURES.

SIR P. P. RUBENS.

RUBENS is believed to have painted the two large landscapes, of which Sir George Beaumont possessed one, and Mr. Champernowne the other, at Genoa ! Yes ; surprising as it may seem when we regard them attentively, and reflect on the local nature of their subjects, and how new in the world was the art of landscape painting at the era of their production.

They were painted at Genoa, and formerly adorned the Doria palace. But Genoa, having long since declined from her commercial importance, had for ages been gradually disposing of her rich merchandise and her treasures of Art, when these pictures were offered to, and were purchased by Mr. Herbert, together with the fine allegory from the same powerfully versatile pencil, of which we have already treated. Mr. Herbert consigned them to Mr. Buchanan, by whom they were resold in England. The late Lady Beaumont, observing that Sir George was much charmed with the present landscape, and having recently come into the possession of a certain independent property, purchased the picture for fifteen hundred guineas, and presented it to her husband ; probably after the rainbow scene had been disposed of to Mr. Champernowne. But those two landscapes ought never to have been separated : and it were now a worthy enterprise to bring them again together, and reposit them both in the National Picture Gallery. They ought never to have been separated—because, when a great artist paints *companion* pictures, the two constitute by their appositions, and

by the light and intelligence which they mutually reflect, but one whole ; and those whom genius hath thus joined, no man should put asunder.

When we contemplate the lofty flight in landscape painting, to which Rubens sprang, from the quaintly-curved trees and clouds of Wolgemuth, Durer, and De Vos, these fine pictures form a memorable era in the history of landscape. Their having been painted at Genoa, though purely Flemish scenes, is a remarkable fact. If they were so painted, with the view of showing the Genoese friends and patrons of the artist, how Flanders differed from Italy, this circumstance may serve in some measure to account for the elaborate solicitude with which he has planted his foreground with such flowering shrubs as are indigenous to the Low countries. But another remarkable fact is, that they were also painted soon after Rubens had for the first time beheld the vigorous and intelligent details and the rich colours of the landscapes of Titian ; when he had probably resolved to assert, by his pencil, his own claims to originality ; while emulative feelings were strong upon him ; and while, with a kindred genius who had preceded him, he was mentally responding—" *I too am a painter.*" This laudable emulative feeling, which it is not difficult for sympathetic minds to trace—is obvious, as well in the historical works which he produced at this period of his life, as in the landscapes before us ; for at this time he imitated in his histories the splendid colouring of Paul Veronese ; had extracted beauty from the peachy blooms of Baroccio ; and in the Champernowne landscape a rainbow is introduced, peasantry are dressed in powerful reds, and other imposing colours ; and various domestic fowl, affording scope for the display of the most vivid

tints, are also there. But we will endeavour to confine our observations to the landscape before us.

It may excite some surprise, and perhaps some more philosophical regard, that although Rubens had now travelled through Spain and Italy, and seen the mountain wonders of the Pyrenees, and the romantic shores of the Mediterranean, he should, when called upon at Genoa to paint a landscape, have produced a scene so perfectly Flemish as is the present. Even if he carried with him—as it is very likely he did—the sketches done from nature in his own country, his youthful recollections must have been of the most lively description, to have enabled him to paint and to finish, so highly, a portrait (or pair of portraits) of his own low lands of “milk and honey;” of fat cattle, delicious fruits, poultry, singing-birds, and other good cheer—a scene where, doubtless, obedient to

“The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,”

he had frequently gone forth at sun-rise to observe and inhale the luxury of landscape; and which he had patriotically cherished in his memory, though far away from *home*. Neither the romantic scenery of Italy, nor that of Spain, nor the admiration in which they were held, nor the compositions of Titian and the Caraccii, the only landscape painters who had preceded Rubens (for Poussin had not yet appeared, and Dominichino was but budding) had been able to efface his early, his vivid, his home-felt impressions: the pure youthful sensations he had experienced when from the studios of Otho Venius and Van Oort, and from the gates of Antwerp,—

“Forth issuing on a summer’s morn, to breathe
Among the pleasant villages and farms,

Adjoin'd, from each thing met, conceived delight;
The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
Or dairy; each rural sight, each rural sound,"

found in the heart of Rubens a permanent lodgment, that the friction of foreign travel could not obliterate, and of which he has left the most unequivocal evidence in the present performance.

The scene before us has been called "The Chateau of Sir Peter Paul Rubens;" but, concerning this report, we entertain some distrust, though we shall not venture to contradict it. We suspect that, before his return from his Italian mission, he *had* no such establishment, nor for eight or ten years afterward: but, to whomsoever it belonged, it is a fine old moated mansion, turretted, and of cinque-cento architecture. We say *it is*—for, like the groves of the poet which "Live in remembrance, and look green in song," the Chateau still exists *in art*, and, unless some unforeseen calamity should supervene, will continue to exist for centuries to come.

The windows of the mansion glitter in the rays of the morning sun, which, by the long and broad shadows it projects, gives effect to the landscape. The season represented, is that which succeeds the harvest, when sportsmen go forth with murderous weapons, and intentions unchecked by the compunctious visitings of conscience, and which partridges, if they kept almanacks, or were duly cognizant of their own danger, might justly dread: but,

"Alas! regardless of their doom,
The little victims play."

A covey of some nine or ten, which an eager sportsman, with his setter, has discovered, are in most imminent peril at a short distance from the fore-

ground. On the immediate fore-ground, the fowler, with his old-fashioned firelock, intent on his sport, and having cocked his fowling-piece, is cautiously and silently creeping under the concealing shadow of an old weather-torn tree-stump, which is festooned with the mandrake-vine and other parasites, and fringed with bramble—the whole of which are painted with great attention to the details of nature.

A little way beyond, a Flemish waggon and horses are fording a rivulet, as if on their way to some neighbouring market with a calf, and other farm produce—one of those large brazen milk vases which are so frequent in the pictures of Cuyp and Teniers, receiving the sun-light on its polished disc, with considerable advantage to the general effect. The old waggon driver has mounted one of the horses in order to clear the ford; and within the waggon, the farmer's daughter, or young wife, sits bonnily dressed in a scarlet jacket, which has an excellent influence on the surrounding verdure. The value of the juxtaposition of a bit of bright red among green groves and glades, is now well known and appreciated by connoisseurs and landscape painters; nor is the reason of it unknown to those who study the philosophy of optics; but Rubens or Titian must have been the *first* to perceive it intuitively.

Beyond the vine-mantled and dark brown tree-stump, a rivulet is seen winding round a rocky knoll, from which a group of tall trees, somewhat scanty of foliage, rise high in the landscape. The sun-radiance glances on the rivulet with the happiest effect; its glittering motion animates the scene; while the immediate contact of this bright light with the dark stump, gives an emphasis to the *chiar-oscuro* in the

right place, conferring clearness on the shadows around it, and keeping the demi-tints in due abeyance.

Though the country represented is flat, the scene is extensive; the artist having taken a somewhat elevated station for his view: in consequence the spectator's eye is taught to wander to a considerable distance, among enclosures formed chiefly by means of lumpish pollard willows and Dutch dykes. Of course, with the exception of a few fore-ground features, the landscape is not very picturesque, though cheerfully interspersed with cottages and farms; among which a distant village spire points toward heaven. The whole forms an apparent, if not a real, portrait of a real scene, elaborately painted, and with such internal evidence of identity about it, that many of those persons who have traversed Flanders are led to fancy that they have seen the place, and that it is a view not far out of the road from Antwerp to Brussels, and within two miles or so of the latter city. There is indeed one circumstance that goes near to prove the fact; which is, that the king is in possession of a rather smaller picture—also from the pencil of Rubens—wherein the same mansion, or another which bears very near resemblance to it, is seen at a somewhat greater distance than in the present. It goes far toward persuading us that it is another view of the same grounds, taken from a different station; so that, after all, it is by no means improbable that the chateau and the surrounding scenery *may* have been an hereditary property of the painter, although not inhabited by him until after his return from his travels. The fore-ground is distinguished by such careful attention to the minutiae,

that a near bush is thickly inhabited by robins and finches, while the sedges, flowering shrubs, and weeds, and multifarious branching as well as foliage of the nearer trees and bushes, are detailed with almost botanic accuracy. Sir George Beaumont, (to whom the public is indebted for this valuable bequest,) was rather fond of descanting on the various beauties and merits of this fore-ground, and of comparing it with the slovenly productions of a similar description of the landscape painters “of these degenerate days;” for, like Homer and Hesiod, the worthy baronet used professedly to think that his own age of art was but an *age of iron*, when compared with the former ages of heroes and of gold—a very few illustrious exceptions, with Reynolds and Wilson at their head, being reluctantly admitted, or admissible, into Limbo.

Rubens appears, in the present instance, to have promised himself to produce an interesting picture of such a *cheerful* tone and character, as, while it did honour to the land of his birth, might harmonize with human feelings—(but more especially with Flemish feelings)—on a fine autumnal morning; and to have effected this, by an assemblage of circumstances, some of which were not perhaps in themselves the most favourable to such a purpose; or—to use a fashionable phrase—not the most “picturesque.” But, in truth, this is partly matter of taste, or matter of opinion, though supposed to be derived from the average feelings and perceptions of painters. If not *picturesque*, however, according to the modern construction and present use of that term, the subject is *Rubens-esque*; and it is the *mind of the artist*, operating on his materials and on his

peculiar view of nature, that makes the *picture*. Hence his claim to the character of a professor of *Art*: hence his plastic power, which, in its highest attainments, it is scarcely a trope to call creative energy. It is his charmed and charming fancy, and obedient pencil, that animates the scene; a scene

“ Whose body Nature is, but *Art* the soul :”

a scene which sympathetically imparts the loveliness of its beauties to congenial minds; so that “ some shall praise the work, and some the architect,” and neither party be mistaken.

The pervading sentiment of cheerfulness which we have noticed above—in short, all that the painter seemed to promise, he has faithfully and successfully performed. Accordingly, we perceive that, though the hour represented is that when the dairy-maids are blithely employed in milking their kine, the sun has manifested sufficient power to have dispelled the morning mists which so frequently shroud these low and flat meadow-lands; and that the clouds are breaking, if not into splendour, into fleecy forms, dappled colours, and cheerful promise: while the lord of the mansion, with part of his family (including an infant with its nurse, for whose health the parent may be supposed to be becomingly solicitous) have stepped forth from a side door, to inhale the early and salubrious breezes,

“ And meet the sun upon the *lowland* lawn.”

ALLEGORIC PAINTING.

As "*The Blessing of Rubens*" is not the only work in the National Gallery of this imaginative kind, and as his *Triumph of St. George*, with other allegories, will follow it, we shall here introduce a few sentences concerning a species of painting now somewhat out of fashion; slighted, almost contemned in some quarters; but not quite obsolete.

The great Flemish painter of Lyric Allegories, has been, if we mistake not, somewhat too thoughtlessly criticised in modern times for indulging his poetic vein; but, nevertheless, we think that the painted Odes of Rubens will firmly stand the test of time to come; and that with Pilate he may briefly repel his carping commentators. "What I have written, I have written," was all that the Roman prefect condescended to reply, to those who would have quarrelled with his inscription for the holy cross.

This florid style of thinking with regard to the pursuits of painting, met with *contemporaneous sanction*. It is by no means necessary that all painters should think alike with regard to the fit exercise of their pencils; but even the contrary—though with liberal deference for each other's motives and practice. Rubens possessed a vivid and exuberant fancy; his habit of regarding the local energies of his art, and his peculiar style of composition, grew out of this teeming imagination; and it inflicts no forbiddal, but leaves free welcome in the exercise of theirs, to the cautious care of the painters of still life, and the colder fancies of dry matter-of-fact men. Have his

modern critics forgotten, or do they brave, what Reynolds has urged in defence of even his Luxembourg Gallery, where Rubens has mingled allegorical figures with the representations of real personages? a fault—if it be a fault—from which the works before us are free. “If (says Sir Joshua) the artist considered himself as engaged to furnish this Gallery with a rich, various, and splendid ornament, this could not be done—at least in an equal degree—without peopling the air and water with these allegorical figures. He therefore accomplished all that he purposed. In this case all lesser considerations, which tend to obstruct the great end of the work, must yield and give way.

“The variety which portraits and modern dresses, mixed with allegorical figures, produce, is not to be slightly given up upon a punctilio of reason, when that reason deprives the art in a manner of its very existence. It must always be remembered, that the business of a great painter, is to produce a great picture; he must therefore take *special care not to be cajoled by specious arguments out of his materials.*

“What has been so often said to the disadvantage of allegorical poetry—that it is tedious and uninteresting—cannot with the same propriety be applied to painting, where the interest is of a different kind. If allegorical painting produces a greater variety of ideal beauty, a richer, a more various and delightful, composition, and gives to the artist a greater opportunity of exhibiting his skill, all the interest he wishes for is accomplished: such a picture not only attracts, but fixes, the attention.

“If it be objected that Rubens judged ill at first,

in thinking it necessary to make his work so very ornamental; this puts the question upon new ground. It was his peculiar style; he could paint in no other; and he was selected for that work probably because it *was* his style."

But, concerning allegoric poetry, has not Sir Joshua conceded too much? Allegoric poetry is not tedious or uninteresting, where the ability of the poet is consummate, or commensurate to the occasion which calls it forth; or, not only Spenser and Mrs. Tighe—the charming Mrs. Tighe—but the great Italian poets, and nearly all poetry, would be tedious and uninteresting; for the merit and beauty of poetry resides chiefly in its *analogies*, or fictions, which, when they reach to *personification*, and are concatenated, are allegorical. What Pope calls the *machinery* of poems—even of those of Homer—is essentially of this kind; for it matters no more in poetry than it does in the arts of the sculptor and painter, whether we call certain figures introduced into its compositions, by the names of Wisdom, Courage, Beauty, &c., or Pallas, Mars, Venus, &c.

All the greater poets,—all those who have delighted much, and will long continue to delight—have abounded in allegoric allusions and personifications. What would Homer, Pindar, Eschylus, Sophocles, be without this element? And why, in modern times, should we reject, or frigidly, or fastidiously, under the mask of criticism, deny its use to the Grays and Miltons—the Rubenses and Reynoldses, of their respective arts?—The Reynoldses?—Yes—the Reynoldses—for Sir Joshua has left us a capital specimen of allegoric painting, in his Tragic Muse, with her sublime attributes.

Poetry, says Aristotle, was first inspired with its soul, which is fiction, by Homer; and with that—which in painting we term allegory—the artist must, in a similar manner, animate his work. Drawing and colouring are the fruits of attention and practice; perspective springs from the geometry of optics; portraiture, from ready manual power, superinduced on a cultivated sense of vision: but that which engages—not merely our improved physical discernment, but—our intellectual faculties also, must needs be of nobler nature.

Finally, we are of opinion, that it is not here—or elsewhere—necessary to write a philosophical essay in vindication of allegoric painting. We think that the production of such a picture as the *Blessing of Rubens* should—and in fact, does—with all persons of cultivated and poetic perceptions, justify itself. The Fine Arts are *sisters*. To say so is itself a brief allegory. They are sisters, and are then most happy when they hold each other in sisterly embraces. Such pictures as the St. George introducing his proselyte Princess to sacred knowledge, and the rapturous expression of the good wishes of Rubens, are like those transporting lyric passages in Pindar or Gray, where the enraptured Muse of Poetry, going as it were beyond herself, becomes picturesque and musical, in the rich abundance of its vivacity, as Rubens, in the works before us, is both musical and poetic.

The advocates for the rejection of allegoric ornament, in the pursuits of Sculpture and Painting, will tell you, that it is better to represent on the monument of a hero a remarkable event of his life, than to exhibit him attended by Victory, or led on by Mars.

Neither would we exclude such single acts of heroism ; but freely admit them into our cathedrals and galleries. They are unexceptionable ; since truth is the purest fountain, both of Art and Fame. But how of the hero of a hundred fights ? How of such an admiral as Nelson ? The Art cannot combine all his triumphs in a single display, though it might record them in detail. And, after all, this is taking but a partial view—chiefly adapted to military operations, of the points at issue—operations with which the world is well nigh surfeited, and which—*moments* of profitless splendour at the best—are far less noble than those intellectual operations with which the philosophical statesman and the man of science are *incessantly* engaged : and these war-triumphs inevitably tend to keep up an old delusion, and to make a class of objects *appear* superior, which are really far otherwise. How, without allegory, could a painter in a single picture, or a sculptor in a monument, adequately eulogise Sir Isaac Newton, Mr. Fox, or Mr. Bentham—not to mention our living luminaries of political philosophy—since it is not on any *one*, but *all* the public efforts of their lives, that their fame is justly rested ?

We have been somewhat diffuse in our remarks on Rubens and allegorical painting : unpremeditatedly so ; yet not without stimulus ; nor, as we trust, quite without reason. When painting calmly presents us with a portrait, or a moral matter of fact, 'tis well. Such subjects may, or may not, induce further reflections ; but it is of the very essence of poetry, or poetic painting, to charm us toward those new avenues of delightful thought which they disclose : to

exalt intellectual aspiration ; to plume the wings of Imagination, electrically to light up trains of kindred sentiments. Wherefore—though we may have amplified beyond the expectations—possibly beyond the wishes—of those readers who see no more in a picture than a few moments amusement ; we have, in fact, only not much checked the spontaneous course of our reveries, by way of exemplifying our doctrine. Have we been a little extravagant—at least, a little grating or so, on the Walpoles of modern statesmanship—in our glances at what Rubens might paint, were he now to reappear. Let the literary reader (if he so please) balance the account with us, by advertising to what Pope has painted, *à la Rubens*, on a similar occasion, and with prophetic reference to the abolition of the slave trade—

“ — *Peace* descending, bids her olives spring,
And scatters blessings from her dove-like wing ;
O stretch thy reign, fair *Peace* ! from shore to shore,
Till *Conquest* cease, and *Slavery* be no more ;
Till the *freed Indians* in their native groves
Reap their own fruits, and woo their sable loves :
Exiled by thee, from earth to deepest hell,
In brazen bonds shall barb'rous *Discord* dwell :
Gigantic *Pride*, pale *Terror*, gloomy *Care*,
And mad *Ambition*, shall attend her there ;
There purple *Vengeance*, bathed in gore, retires,
Her weapons blunted, and extinct her fires ;
There hated *Envy* her own snakes shall feel,
And *Persecution* mourn her broken wheel ;
There *Faction* roar ; *Rebellion* bite her chain ;
And gasping *Furies* thirst for blood, in vain.”

THE HOLY FAMILY, WITH OTHER SAINTS;
OR, TRIUMPH OF ST. GEORGE.

RUBENS.

THE composition which has been called "Rubens's Holy Family, with St. George and other Saints;" seems not to have been thoroughly understood, and, in consequence, has not been very intelligibly denominated. Were it to be entitled *Saint George introducing his proselyte Princess to the Fountains of Christian Faith*—or, *the Triumph of Saint George*,—or something tantamount to this in meaning—more light would be shed on the picture, and people would probably know better how to understand what they were looking at.

But even this requires explanation; for the composition, though it probably emanated from the mind of Rubens, belongs to that class of pictures of which in discoursing of a work by Mazzolino of Ferrara, we have given some account; wherein, with little regard to time or place, or the ordinary rules of consistency, or congruity, saints of different ages of Christianity are associated, and angels and mortals, and heaven and earth, are mingled, in order to gratify the personal vanities of patrons, or the absurd taste of ignorant devotees.

The youthful, ardent, and vigorous imagination of this great Flemish master, being opportunely transplanted to that Italian nursery, where the genial sunlight of sacerdotal and patrician patronage, beamed on the hot-bed of superstitious zeal—reflecting on this circumstance, our wonder ceases that it should have blossomed and fructified luxuriantly: and the

rich and peculiar flavour of its fruits, though it delights us much, surprises us not. The plain truth, and the actual motives of the two parties concerned in the production of such works, were, that a more ample license was thus afforded to the artists, of selecting and introducing a greater variety of rich dresses, human and divine personages, and other picturesque materials, from the costumes of past and present ages and nations; while pictures, more imposing and promotive of ascetic devotion and papal authority, were thus produced; and the painters and their employers mutually rejoiced in the local capabilities of an art which could confer on its fictitious creations an air of verity. Hence large drafts were drawn upon the credulity of the picture-gazing populace, while the painters readily availed themselves of the licence which Sir Joshua Reynolds was willing to grant to such artists as Rubens.

To such artists as Rubens—(have we written?)—These words “must give us pause.” Where shall we find *another* so copious and abundant in his pictorial outpourings? or possessed of such power of significant and creative energy in his allegorical and emblematic allusions? Nor do we in the above paragraph mean that Rubens, like Mazzolino and some others, painted obsequiously and precisely “to order.” No. Where others were bewildered, and were content to abide in their wildernesses, the illustrious Fleming, saw places of refuge, and even tracks of rectitude; and was sometimes enabled to strike light out of the darkness of superstitious ignorance. We shall, finally, see how far the picture before us warrants these assertions. Rubens’s meaning is not always so evident, that those who run may read;

neither should it be so, for good pictures would not be good pictures, unless they were calculated to arrest and detain awhile, as well as gratify, attention.

“ A thing of beauty, is a joy for ever ;
Its loveliness increases ; it will never
Pass into nothingness ; but still will keep
A bower quiet for us.”——

The contemplation of works of Art, is very far from being the proper, emotionless, occupation, of indolent *ennui*, or from belonging to its system of indifferences ; and the mind of man may be permitted, agreeably and innocently, to flatter itself with the consciousness of overcoming small difficulties, as well as to take pleasure in the exercise. Whenever Rubens launches into the poetry of his art, and is not understood by the help of a little reflection, I incline to think that “ the fault—is not in our Rubens, but in ourselves, if we are underlings ” in comprehending his meaning.

Neither let the generality of observers be too much daunted, or feel shame, (as some are too apt to do) if they happen not soon to perceive the full extent of his intention, or not to coincide with each other, in that respect. It is not merely what we at first see in a picture, that is gratifying, (though superficial qualities are often the most striking,) nor is it even at last, simply what we *see* ; but,—the mind being addressed through the sense of vision—the trains of ideas that are thus electrically lit up, will not be, and need not be, precisely the same in all persons. In viewing a picture, as in reading a poem, there are indisputably points of *general* agreement among those who understand the author rightly ; but there are also so many minor points, wherein we may differ without impeachment of our tastes or judgments, that it may be ques-

tioned whether any number, either of readers or spectators, ever quit either poem or picture, with exactly the same mental impressions.

In order to illustrate how the present writer understands the poetry of this religious allegory—for such it is—from the school, and partly perhaps from the pencil, of Rubens, in which, at the first glance, chronology and geography seem to be set at variance, or set at nought; and an event which took place on the borders of the Holy Land during the infancy of our Saviour, seems to be incongruously blended with another, which did not take place till three centuries and a half afterward, and took place in Egypt, or in Libya—we must submit a little sketch both of the Holy Family, as separately depicted by Rubens, and of the legend of St. George and his royal proselyte: nor does it matter with which we commence.

In one sense (possibly in more than one) the present work is a compilation. Rubens had *previously* painted—or at least, designed—a Holy Family on their way back from Egypt to Nazareth; a sort of subject which in Italy, is, with an air of technicality, termed a *Reposo*—wherein, while St. Joseph sleeps, and the Ass is helping himself to provender, the Madonna sits on a bank with the Holy Infant, and three infantile Cherubs, or Christian Loves,—one of them having the gauzy wings of a Zephyr, indicating (we may suppose) the refreshing western breezes which attended their homeward progress—are recreating the Madonna by caressing a Lamb; a scriptural emblem, or allusion, which assimilates both pictorially and poetically, with the rest of the composition. One of the group appears to be the infant precursor of Christ, who afterward, and on the banks of the

Jordan, called on his proselytes to "repent," and "behold the Lamb of God."

The Holy Family is either here represented as reposing, or resting, on the margin of that river; or as having recently passed "the brook that parts Egypt from Syrian ground," (to use the words of Milton) which, in the print, dashes into a *cascatella*, on the bank of which their humble sumpter-beast is browsing, while Joseph sleeps, and the infant Christ and his Mother, are amused with the Baptist, the Cherubs, and the Lamb.

There is a coarse but masterly engraving on wood (by Christopher Jegher) of *this part* of the composition, with the arrangement of which Rubens appears to have been so well satisfied, as to have induced him to re-introduce it, with scarcely any variation, upon the present occasion—or to *consent* to its re-introduction. We must now rehearse such parts of the ancient legend of *Saint George* as we have not already set before our readers (in treating of the pictures of that subject by Dominichino and Tintoret) and as are necessary to our farther explications.

Once upon a time the thrice renowned St. George excursed into Libya to the city of Selene, near which was a lake, occasionally inhabited by a dragon (or sort of hydra) that envenomed all the country around, and benumbed the people with his breath, when he approached their city. Two sheep were given to him every day; till—the flocks of the citizens failing them, they were compelled to compromise for one sheep and one human victim *per diem*; to be chosen by lot. The lot having at length fallen on the king's daughter, and her eight days of respite having

nearly expired; the king, on the eighth day, arrayed his daughter as for her bridal; embraced, gave her his benediction, and led her forth toward the lair of the dreadful Dragon, where presently—as in chivalric duty bound—appeared the redoubtable knight, completely armed; nothing daunted; and mounted on his trusty charger. After listening to a few words of disinterested dissuasion from the beautiful princess; who, of course, saw with amiable and becoming reluctance, so gallant a knight expose himself for her sake, to danger so imminent; St. George boldly encountered the Dragon in the holy name of Jesus Christ. “He rode fiercely against the monster, and sorely wounded him with his spear. Then said the victorious knight to the royal maiden, I prithee, fair lady, deliver to me thy girdle: be not dismayed; and assist me in binding it about the neck of the Dragon. [We somewhat abbreviate the well known parts of the story, and leave the black-letter types and the obsolete orthography to “the lions of literature.”] When this binding was accomplished (saith the veritable and all accomplished Wynkyn) “y^e Dragon followedde her, as it had been a meke beste and debonayre. Thus she ledde hym into the citeye.” The people fled at his approach; but finally returning, partook of the initiatory sacrament; and a church was there founded, within which sprang a fountain of living waters, which healed those who were sick.

St. George finally slew the Dragon, and smote off his head: but it required four carts, with heaven knows how many yoke of oxen, to withdraw his carcase from the city. The newly edified church was dedicated to Our Lady and St. George; and the

king, with fifteen thousand of his male subjects, beside women and children, were there baptized.— Thus far the legend.

The victory of this valorous and renowned Arian champion, over the baleful and dreaded Dragon of the Athanasian heresy, having before been repeatedly painted, and always in the same manner, Rubens chose to avoid re-mounting the knight on his war-steed. He might think the selection of this point of time was becoming too common; or he might think that he did more real honour to the holy George (who appears to have been a great favourite with him,) by painting that *sequel* of the history, which crowned his chivalrous enterprise with the glories of an illustrious proselyte, and a cathedral church. Neither could Rubens, or St. George, as true and zealous Christian knights, have done otherwise than introduce the royal proselyte to a knowledge of the divine truths on which her faith and hope must finally be rested; such acquaintance being supposed to be indispensable to her redemption and salvation. This sequel to the combat, is in fact the *consummation* of Saint George's victorious enterprise.

Thus much concerning a legend which Rubens had evidently read and studied, it seemed necessary that the reader should have in mind, in order to approximate to a true comprehension of the picture of "The Triumph of St. George;" which picture does not mean, as some have erroneously supposed, that Saint George, after his real or supposed martyrdom, introduced his proselyte princess to the Madonna in Paradise, or in a state of beatitude. No: the depicted transaction is on terra firma; and the Prin-

cess is introduced, not to the Holy Family only, but also to St. Mary Magdalen: that is to say—not only made acquainted with the mystery of the holy incarnation and the means of redemption, but also with the example of a penitent sinner like herself, who had erred and strayed, and been pardoned and accepted, and who here appears with a poetic meaning that is sufficiently obvious, to usher the princess into deific presence. Here is the *sentiment* of the picture; or religious lesson which it inculcates. The champion introduces the converted princess, *to the knowledge of* the fountains of Christian faith, by duly informing her of the mysterious birth and divine mission of the Saviour, according to the Arian creed; to which St. John the Baptist, the Lamb, St. Joseph, and the flight into Egypt, were but accessories. These accessories, however, which are introduced to improve the composition and aid the religious sentiment, are quite homogeneous with the rest of the performance, as well as the little Loves and Zephyrus which are disporting around the Lamb. One of these celestial infants, or cherubs, is sporting in the air above, and scattering flowers before the Madonna; whose figure is rendered conspicuous and important, by the red and blue drapery in which she is attired. The Zephyrus reclines against the Lamb; while of the two other children, one appears to be the infant Baptist, and the other, who is doubtless of heavenly descent, seems to be communicating to him the glad tidings that the Lamb they are playing with, is but the symbol of the *real Lamb of God*, to whom he is pointing, as the divine infant reposes on the lap of Mary. A poetic touch—quite worthy of the rich

imagination of the master; which shows forth the intrinsic energies of his art; and claims for it the glory of being worthy to illustrate the writings of the evangelists.

Rubens *perhaps* made the design as an altar-piece to some church or chapel of St. George—the patron saint (as I suspect) of Antwerp, as well as of England and Portugal. His main object was to *honour that saint*. He has, therefore, introduced him as having led in the rescued Princess of Selene. She bridles with her silken girdle, the wounded Dragon, which, though formerly so dreadful and devouring, now follows her “as a meek beast,” with the spear-head of her valorous champion implanted in his shoulder. The champion is planting the banner of Christian faith, as if he had arrived with his proselyte at the spot, where, in Libya, or Upper Egypt, the original Christian church, “dedicated to our Lady and Saint George,” was planted and edified. This fact, of the foundation of the church,—which Dominichino, by an anachronism, has represented in his picture as existing before the victory over the Dragon was achieved, Rubens has here combined with that of the valorous knight introducing his convert to the knowledge of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ; and to that of (St. Mary Magdalen) another illustrious female convert to the true faith, who had been canonized. Such truths, a painter has, perhaps, no other so effectual mode of imparting; and no symbol could possibly be more pertinent than the unfurling flag, especially when we consider it as addressed to an age steeped in superstition and in military usages.

Divested of that garb of fiction, which, as before

observed, served as poetry to the early Catholic devotees, the brief explication of all this, is probably, that an Athanasian monastery, where fierce polemic disputes were carried on, had been erected on an island, or cape, which jutted into the Selene lake ; that, the fuller's son of Cappadocia, after he became bishop of Alexandria, went thither, entered into controversial disputes, and (at least among his own flock, and partisans of the Arian persuasion) was believed to have come off victorious (over the satanic agency, by which the Athanasian disputant, or disputants, were *of course* instigated :) that many of the subjects of the pagan prince, had previously become proselyte to *Christianity according to the Athanasian doctrines* : that his daughter was believed to be in imminent danger of being devoured by this terrible dragon, and probably would have been so devoured, had not St. George hastened to her rescue, and converted her to Arianism ; and that subsequently an Arian church was erected within the city of Selene, where the king (or chief) and his subjects, to the amount of fifteen thousand males, beside women and children, were initiated by baptism. The architecture which Rubens has introduced immediately beyond his figures, is probably intended to suggest, not so much the commencement of the erection of the Christian church, as that the scene of the picture is within the city.

To confer probability, perspicuity, and thorough consistency, on the story, or legend, of St. George, we must (as has been observed in an earlier page) suppose the chief of *Selene* to have been a Pagan, and his daughter a half-converted Athanasian. Now,

all this—or something very like it—may very possibly have taken place in the fourth century, at *Bubastis*—a *Moon-city* of the Delta, whither Bishop George is not unlikely to have journeyed from Alexandria—where he had collected, and where he kept, his polemic library—to dispute with the Athanasian doctors.

Such appears to be a brief statement of the simple facts, upon which this painted fiction, from the hand of Rubens, has been erected. Our late friend Hazlitt had given them but superficial regard, if even that, when he termed the performance “an Allegory of Rubens himself and his *three* wives [Rubens never had more wives than Rachel Ruysch and Helena Formans, and left his *second* wife a widow] as a St. George and Holy Family; with his children as Christ and St. John, playing with a lamb;” and though we shall add what he says, as well as what Mr. Otteley says, in the way of encomium, in order to assist the reader in forming his own estimate of the merits of this picture, we shall do so without vouching for the critical pertinence of either.

“Rubens has here,” says Hazlitt, “contrived to bring together all that is rich in antique dresses (black as jet, and shining like diamonds,) transparent in flesh colour; agreeable in landscape; unfettered in composition—the light streams from rosy clouds; the breeze curls the branches of the trees in the background, and plays in the clear complexions of the various scattered group. It is one of this painter’s most splendid, and at the same time most solid and sharply finished productions.”—Thus far Hazlitt.—But the picture presents us with no light streaming from rosy clouds, and no such rosy clouds as he

fancied, for it to stream from. Instead thereof, we see only the dull, grey clouds which hang over Holland, and the low lands around it, while the sun cheers them not: and, for the trees, they are but stunted, and scant of foliage. Hazlitt, whose nervous sensibility made him fancy that to make notes in a picture-gallery, looked like pilfering—must have gone home from that of Mr. Angerstein in a gracious mood, and *bestowed* these rosy clouds; this splendour and sharp finishing; and these three clear-complexioned *wives, as he supposed, upon Rubens*; or (as we rather infer) his impression from the really splendid “Rape of the Sabines,” must have confused itself with *his* “Allegory of Rubens,” &c.

Mr. Ottley records, that the picture “is said to have been one of those pieces that remained in the possession of the widow of Rubens after his death. That he was partial to the composition, appears from his having caused the principal part of it to be engraved upon a large scale in wood, by Christopher Jegher, after a drawing prepared by himself for the purpose.”

This last is at best but an inconclusive argument. Admitting the whole composition to be from the pencil of Rubens, if he was partial to the whole, why did he, in causing it to be engraved, cause any part to be omitted? Is it at all likely that he would do so? But, can it with propriety be said, that the part which Jegher has engraved, *is* the principal part? Is not the group of St. George, the Dragon, and the two female Saints, of at least as much importance, as pictorial and as poetical objects, as the Holy Family? Again—Can a cabinet picture (of these comparatively small dimensions too) from the pencil

of this distinguished master, remaining unsold at the time of his decease, be regarded as a proof, or even as a presumption, of its superlative merit, or its originality? We should rather be led to the *contrary* inference—his finest works of such portable dimensions as five feet by four, being in such high request.

But there are two other known pictures by Rubens, of that portion of the present composition, which Mr. Ottley would exclude from being considered as the *principal* part: namely, the group with the Libyan Princess leading in the wounded Dragon, and St. Mary Magdalen, whom the painter has perhaps associated with the Princess, on account of their both being repentant and converted sinners. Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his "Journey through Flanders and Holland," has mentioned one of these, as existing behind the choir in the church of Bequinge, at Antwerp. "The character of St. George (he says) is Rubens's own portrait; and Mary Magdalen, and the Saint near her [the canonized Princess], are said to be the portraits of his two wives." The Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, are also there.

In these pictures, as well as in that in our National Gallery, St. George is planting the banner of Christian faith. According to my estimation, *this* may be regarded as a *principal* feature in them all. And as this, and the planting of a Christian church (of which the unfurling flag is indeed the symbol), were consequent on the victory of the holy champion, perhaps *The Triumph of Saint George* had been the fittest brief designation of these pictures.

There exists, then, from the hand of Rubens, three several pictures of the component parts of the work before us, exclusively of the present composition, or

compilation, viz. 1st. The Holy Family, without the canonized proselytes. 2d. The canonized proselytes, without the Holy Family, and 3d, The canonized proselytes with the Madonna and Bambino.—The last, a more copious and consistent allegory, and more directly allusive to the edification of the first Saint George's church, than either of the others: and this most perfect and appropriate composition, now adorns the chapel of St. George, or of Rubens, in the church of Bequinage at Antwerp.

Now, what if, by way of exercising, or calling forth, the talents of Rockhorst (otherwise Langjan), or Vanduyck, or Van Tulden, or some other of the most highly esteemed and able of his disciples, during his pupillage,—what if Rubens had put him upon the task, or lesson, of copying and combining the two compositions upon a reduced scale? What if he had done so in the anticipation that a good and valuable work would thus be produced? Would not the result have been such as we here behold? Or such as Rubens, with a very few touches from his own pencil, might easily have wrought up to *this degree* of perfection?—But it cost Mr. Angerstein fifteen hundred guineas: and that is thought to be a weighty argument, in proof of its originality. Be it so, if the critical reader should so please to estimate. Mr. A. purchased it, we believe, with the concurrence of Sir Thomas Lawrence, of a picture broker (whose name has escaped us). This broker imported it into England, and probably reported—and it *may* be truly—of its past history, what Mr. Ottley has transmitted. We mean not to repudiate or impeach the veracity of the broker. But if Sir Thomas *continued* to think it a genuine Rubens throughout, why did he afterward

cover part of the back and loins of the infant Christ, with white drapery from his own palette?

We shall venture to state a few other grounds of our scepticism as to the originality — not of the design, but the execution—of this Triumph of St. George. Not only the Infant Christ has been improved, or its defects partly covered up, by Sir Thomas Lawrence; but certain other emendations are observable, from his having employed a less shining vehicle for his colours than the original painter; and from the picture not having since been varnished. Sir Thomas has worked upon the left wrist of the Madonna, which was obviously too thick, and is so still; and in some other places has touched upon the extremities, which, notwithstanding these improvements, fall very far short, as we deem, from appearing to have resulted from the intelligent touch of Rubens himself; or from warranting Hazlitt's encomium.

What is seen of the right hand of the Madonna, is still more defective than her left; and her face is a little out of drawing, the left eye being posited rather too high up in her head. The little genius too, or cherub, who has descended to prompt the young precursor of Christ, or initiate him in the mysterious duties of his divine mission; he who would attract the especial attention of St. John, to the sleeping Saviour, is another instance of careless, or rather unintelligent drawing: in particular, let his right hand and arm be examined, or the feet of the zephyr-boy. It will soon be seen, too, that Hazlitt has expatiated at home, and from very hasty inspection, when he wrote of rosy clouds, mistaking for such the dull, heavy, grey clouds of Holland; and termed this work one of the painter's most splendid, most solid,

and *sharply finished*, productions; for precision of touch, which he terms sharp finishing, is just what it wants.

Were any modern Academician to paint such hands and feet as may be found in this picture, he would be justly censured. And, as a further test of the truths and opinions to which we are here giving utterance—let these extremities be compared with the hands, feet, &c. in Rubens's Rape of the Sabines, which are numerous. We venture to predict, that it will soon appear whether we ought or ought not, to ascribe them to the pencil of Rubens himself, or to that of some pupil.

P. S. Saint George appears to have been a great favourite with Sir Peter Paul, whose fervid fancy was precisely of a description to catch from his romantic story the lambent flame of chivalrous inspiration and pictorial enterprise. Beside the abovementioned *triumphs* of the renowned knight, he painted, while in England; a *Victory* of St. George, still avoiding that equestrian exhibition of the Christian knight to which other artists had attached themselves. But—of this subject, he produced a very fine picture for Charles I. wherein the King of England is made to personate the victorious champion; and the Queen (Henrietta Maria) represents the proselyte princess, from whom St. George is gallantly receiving the fascinating girdle. Whether this allude to any hope or expectation entertained by the king or the painter, that the queen would become protestant, may be conjectured, but cannot now be ascertained. The picture, which belongs to British *history*, is in his Majesty's collection, and adorns the new Rubens room at

Windsor Castle, which has lately been judiciously arranged by Mr. Segulier. The landscape part of this curious picture, being portrayed from the banks of our own Thames, near Richmond,—the work—like Rubens's Lyric Ode to King Charles—is intimately connected with the national history.

AN ITALIAN SUMMER'S MORNING, WITH A
PROCESSION OF PEASANTRY.

JAN BOTH.

WHEN Jan Both migrated from Utrecht to Italy, he did not, like Rubens, continue to cherish his home recollections, but, roused to romantic ardour by the rocks, waterfalls, lakes, and luxuriant verdure of the land of classic landscape, resigned his earlier feelings, to the influence and imagery of its genial climate, which carried him almost to the opposite extreme; and hence—instead of the dank meadows, and cool and willow-clad rivulets, of the Low Countries, which glide into “the lazy Scheldt”—passionately attached himself to those glowing southern sun-sets, and romantic, thorny-shaped trees—abundant in branches and scant of foliage, which he found shooting up from among the fissures between the granite and marble blocks of the Pennine Alps, and of Sienna and Tuscany; which were congenial to his own peculiar taste. His talent was like a flower or a tree that had sprung up in chilliness, transplanted and transported to a kindly climate, where it could bloom and fructify in wild luxuriance. Rocks, ruins, and waterfalls,—wildness, and a warm atmosphere—were the elements

of his taste ; and the interesting and beautiful effects of agricultural neglect, and the accidents of Nature—the genuine sources of legitimate variety in landscape-painting, he well knew to treasure up and transmute to pictorial gold. He could group and combine these rich beauties, in all their various forms and attitudes, and adapt them to the especial nature of each of his several landscape compositions.

The neighbourhood of the small lakes which lie between the foot of the Alps and the northern commencement of the Apennine mountains, traversed as they are by picturesque trains of mules and peasantry conveying their mercantile wares and market produce, were to our artist, paradisaical scenes, in which his fancy and his pencil expatiated ; and so keen and tenacious were his sensibilities, and so much beauty did he perceive in, and extract from, her minutest forms—so dear were they severally to his peculiar taste, that he appears unwilling to spare, or suppress, a single one—even where other landscape-painters would have thought, or inferred, that the necessary attention to breadth absolutely required such suppression. Hence his compositions are, perhaps, somewhat too much crowded with minute particulars—at least for what is at present, English and conventional in landscape-painting ; but yet are extremely beautiful, and highly gratifying to those congenial tastes which love to linger and dwell on the details of Nature, and can trace elegance in a solitary oat, or bulrush, or mossy branch, as well as grandeur in a forest of pine or oak trees.

The present landscape has all the delightful characteristics of the master ; and, being a morning scene, in which the spectator is taught to believe he

is looking southward, has more of cool grey than his sun-sets ; and though it abounds in wild accidents of minute beauty, the breadth and harmony of the chiar-oscuro are so little disturbed thereby, that after you have enjoyed the general effect by a distant view, you may approach and dwell severally upon the parts of which it consists, with no less delight.

Tracing, as in his works you may, almost every movement of his tasteful pencil, and the delicate perception and intense enjoyment of the more minute wildnesses of nature that must have attended on, or prompted, those movements, it is difficult to imagine a happier man in his professional concernment, than Jan Both must have been whilst practically engaged in his art.

He may be regarded as the contemporary, and in some degree as the rival, of Claude of Lorraine, for though born ten years after that distinguished painter, he died thirty-two years before him, having been accidentally drowned in the canal at Venice. His works are therefore comparatively few ; and if Claude excelled him, it was not till after he was dead. Had he lived to the age of his rival, there is no knowing that the balance might not have preponderated the other way.

Those few pictures, however, amply justify the encomiums of his biographers. Pilkington and Strutt coincide in stating that "the warmth of his skies ; the judicious and regular receding of his objects ; and the sweetness of his distances, afford a pleasure superior to that produced by the works of almost any other artist. His tints are so admirably formed [selected] as to express not only the light of morning breaking from behind hills and woods, and diffusing

a warm glow over the whole face of Nature ; and also the setting of the sun with its tinge in the clouds ; but even the different hours of the day. By his glowing colouring, he obtained the distinction of being called *Both of Italy*." But perhaps this addition may have been used partly to distinguish him from his brother Andrew, who settled in his native city of Utrecht.

No person of taste who looks at the present picture, and who had the honour of Sir George Beaumont's acquaintance, will be surprised at the evident pleasure which the baronet enjoyed and expressed, in possessing so fine a picture from the pencil of John Both. Few pictures have more of what we deem the best evidence of a perfect landscape : namely—that it leaves the connoisseur in doubt whether it be a view or a composition—so completely is the truth of Nature combined with the charms of Art. There are, doubtless, many such scenes in Nature, where the Tyrolean Alps break down among the lakes and rivers of Northern Italy, and it is more than possible that the mountain torrent, which forms a small cascade at the right hand corner of the picture, may feed the Adige, or some other streamlet of the Po.

The procession of mules laden with merchandise, is introduced with competent local knowledge, and painted with exquisite taste. The far off traveller passing near an immense granite rock, shows the devious winding of the rugged Alpine road. The distant lake, with the towers and villages beyond, and the more distant branch of the Apennine Mountains, melting as it were into the glowing atmosphere, are happily and harmoniously combined. And amid these ample features, the rising larks are not forgotten ;

while the branches, weeds, and brambles, springing or depending from the fissures in the rocks, compose, with the broken trees, a rich and various fore-ground, where a certain portion of cool brown, and grey, tints, are introduced with correct local references, and an excellent apposition to the warm, clear splendour which enlightens the distant landscape; where all seems as if the genial spirit of happiness were spreading her ample wings of pervasion, over the early terrestrial scene, and Nature were sending up her orisons to the throne of grace before sin entered the world. Milton had passed this way* before he wrote of Paradise, and such scenes must have been in his recollection when he sung—

“ Ye mists and exhalations that now rise
From hill or steaming lake, dusky or gray
Till the sun paints your fleecy skirts with gold!
In honour to the world’s great Author, rise;
Whether to deck with clouds th’ uncolour’d sky,
Or wet the thirsty earth with falling show’rs,
Rising or falling, still advance his praise.

—— Wave your tops, ye pines;
With ev’ry plant—in sign of worship, wave.
Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow
Melodious murmurs—warbling tune his praise.”

The cattle and figures—as is constantly the case in Both’s landscapes—are introduced with masterly relevance, being attired in the local costume of Northern Italy, and placed precisely where such breadths of light, shade, and colour, conduce most efficiently to the general result, or totality of the composition. A brilliant light catches on the baggage carried by a sumpter horse, which precedes the rest of the proces-

* Milton returned from Italy by this route, according to his editor and biographer, Dr. Newton.

sion, and connects itself, with the happiest effect, with that on a bold fragment of fore-ground rock, fringed with ornamental shrubs. A woman dressed in a dark boddice and bright kerchief, and placed just where they are wanted to impart clear air tint to the distance—riding on an ass; and a muleteer leading onward his beasts laden with commercial packages, receive subordinate portions of this brightest light in the picture.

Upon reading over what we have written of this picture, and revisiting the Gallery, we think that our colouring may be a *little* too warm: the Beaumont Both being, in truth, the most sober-toned work of this artist that is perhaps anywhere extant.

GROUP OF THREE PORTRAITS.

SIR ANTHONY VANDYCK.

CONCERNING the present group—which would consist of three half-length figures, but for the interposition of a portion of an ornamented slab, or cabinet—our readers will readily infer, that the principal figure is that of an artist, or gentleman of condition, from his air of unassumed superiority, and from the manner in which he is introduced as conversing with one of his companions; the other, who is producing a small statue, seems—as we shall more particularly notice below—a little too much like an interruption of their colloquy.

But that this principal personage is (as has been supposed) the veritable portrait of Sir Peter Paul Rubens—such persons as may have seen—and who

has not?—the portraits of that justly celebrated painter, from the pencil of Rubens himself (which are by no means uncommon) will probably be led to entertain some doubt, if not to disbelieve.

Among the infidels, or sceptics, are ourselves. It is not easy to suppose that the pupil can have differed so much from his master, with regard to the portraiture of that master, as the present picture differs from that often-repeated portrait of Rubens, with the round hat, and gracefully curled moustaches, which is so well known to be from his own admired pencil; which is decidedly more dignified and sedate in physiognomy than the present, and of which there are so many repetitions in the royal and noble galleries of this kingdom (and one in the collection of Mr. Strutt, of Groton Place, Suffolk.) In short, few portraits have been so multiplied as this of the great painter of Antwerp.

There are beside, several engravings of this remarkable picture, which the public may easily compare with the Vandyck of which we are here discoursing; or the visiter of the National Gallery, may, if he should so please, by moving a few steps, endeavour to identify this countenance with those of the Mars of Rubens' Allegory, or the St. George of his sacred group which we have just dismissed; both of which are well-known portraits of the artist himself—a little modified, so as to adapt them to the several occasions. These are far more noble and elevated in character than the present, and are without the prominent cheek-bones and upper lip, which contribute so materially to confer peculiarity on the physiognomy of this portrait from the pencil of Vandyck; which,

however, is a work of great merit. The hands as well as the face of the principal figure, are delicately, though firmly, drawn; and the whole composition, as well as execution, of the work, is fraught with the peculiar taste, the simplicity, the mellowness, the mildly pensive, gentlemanly, intelligence,—which confer sentiment and superiority on the best portraits of Vandyck, and *may* justify to its full extent the commendatory anecdote related of it—that at the conclusion of the sale of Sir Joshua Reynolds's pictures, Edmund Burke congratulated Mr. Angerstein, who had purchased this performance, upon possessing, what he said the late president esteemed *his favourite* picture. We cannot ourselves, by any means, profess to regard it as one of Vandyck's master-pieces; and the price at which Mr. Angerstein purchased this picture (one hundred and forty guineas) does not appear to mark that it stood *very* high in the general estimation.

If we are not mistaken, the work before us is, what might be styled a biographical picture—that is to say, it relates to some local domestic event which really happened, where the persons represented (which all appear to be portraits) were the actors, and where a certain statue was produced by one of the parties. This idea, however, may have suggested itself to the mind of Vandyck, or have been “hit upon” (as the colloquial phrase is) as an eligible vehicle of portraiture, and adopted as being characteristic of an opulent and tasteful amateur, *who was* distinguished for his collection of valuable works of art.

In this latter case, we are presented with a painted

indecorum, or slight breach of good manners: to use a **common adage**, "Here are more talkers than hearers."

The look, the parted lips, and the action of the right hand, of the principal figure, plainly indicate that he is vocally addressing the attentive figure in profile. Heedless of this fact, the swart-complexioned man in the back-ground is *also* speaking, and seemingly concerning a small statue which he introduces, and toward which he is earnestly pointing: now in this there is apparent indecorum. It is disrespectful to the principal personage, be he who he may, that another, who seems to be an attendant, or inferior, should be interrupting him by speaking at the same time. It is not improbable, however, that a knowledge of the local anecdote which is above supposed to have given birth to the picture—such as the unexpected finding and sudden reproduction of a long lost rarity, which might fully warrant interruption—would have explained and reconciled us to this *seeming* indecorum; for, that the most decorous of portrait painters, should have run or slipped into *real* indecorum, who but would be extremely backward to believe?

Vandyck was, and still is, among portrait painters, what Aristippus—who excelled in local propriety of thought, word, and action, sustained by admirable presence of mind—was, among the philosophers of old. He in these respects was singular and superlative, and therefore celebrated. "Though modest, Aristippus was assured, and might dare to do and say any thing, because he always said and did every thing in the proper way, and at the proper time;

always at the moment felt what was fitting or not fitting; how far he might go, and what was enough—a tact, that in the art of life, as well as in every other art, distinguishes the real master. Hence at Syracuse, he could play the courtier, divert Dionysius [the tyrant], accept presents, perhaps even at times receive ill treatment from him, without lessening his own dignity, or becoming contemptible to the court or the prince. Hence, he could, as it suited him, appear in an elegant or a mean dress, without in the one looking like a fop, or in the other like a vulgar person. Hence it arose that he was never embarrassed about what he ought to say or do, in whatever circumstances he was placed, or whatever was the station, family, or character of the persons with whom he had to do. Hence it was that he was everywhere domestic—everywhere in his proper element.”

By an analogy not difficult to trace in his works, we perceive that Vandyck is all this in portrait painting, and stands forth just as decidedly from other practitioners of the Art, as Aristippus did from the founders of the more peremptory and abrupt schools of philosophy. The peculiar and genuine gentility of his portraits, seems just as much to result from inborn sentiment. The systematic part of his art, might perhaps be taught upon ascertainable principles; but there would still remain much of the tasteful delicacy with which he himself practised it as it were by prerogative, which could be comprised in no formulary, and reduced to no verbal rules. His urbane and gentlemanly airs; his plain truth and simplicity; his delicate daring, and his unsophisticated grace, all of which are so happily exemplified in our next article, would remain to himself.

PORTRAIT OF GEVARTIUS.

VANDYCK.

THIS fine portrait is painted as if the artist strongly felt, or well knew, that to exhibit the *true character of the original*—neither more nor less—was the proper object of the portrait painter's art; and that all else was mere apparatus, or meretricious display, and but the trappings and the suits of *Art*:—as if he confidently anticipated that the eye of sound taste would put aside other pretension and display, as a discerning and upright judge puts aside barristerial sophistry, and only look to see if a painted portrait had Nature's stamp and legend. Hence the simplicity and singlemindedness of his works—of which this head of Gevartius is one of the very finest—bore the strongest analogical resemblance in style to the eloquence of Ulysses, who, as the poet informs us, was perfectly unpretending, and

“ Said no more than just the things he ought.”

The reasons may have been, that—having an unusual share of native delicacy of perception, and living before the age of conventional allurement in portrait-painting—he had nothing of which to divest himself, but his mind went straight to the destined mark, like an arrow from a strong arm and a well-strung bow; and his accurate sense of vision, and steady nerves, made less effort and less practice necessary to him, than to less highly gifted artists.

We may nevertheless notice a distinction in his works. They are not all performed under the same

set of impulses, or attractions, nor through precisely the same medium of discernment. It is well known that he was the most distinguished of the disciples of Rubens; and that his earlier, partook more than his later, works, of the peculiarities of that great master. We are all, necessarily, creatures of imitation; and this, as respects the art of painting, is as entirely in the nature of things, as that children should at first speak the dialect, and adopt implicitly the creed, of their parents; which, in some instances, remains through life the same, and in others is modified, by subsequent cultivation, or innate energy, into original and individual peculiarity.

The head of Gevartius was painted while Vandyck stood in the radiance of Rubens, and looked at Nature through that radiance. Hence it appears as if the pencils and the minds of both artists had been engaged in its production; and as though the *taste* of Vandyck was superinduced on the *style* of his master. The late president West, who, with graceful humility, became a meek student in its presence, and copied it at the Gallery of the British Institution, was sometimes inclined to ascribe this picture to Rubens, and at others thought that Rubens had touched upon it: but upon this consideration we forbear to enter, since we perceive no certain means of egress. Doubtless Vandyck has well entitled himself to the honour which attaches to the productions of this transcendental portrait, and though certain touches about the chin and beard, might, and may, have proceeded from the hand of his master, there is that liquid and living lustre in the eye, and that precision of just harmony in the relation of the features to each other, that perfect freedom of hand, and that exactitude of

drawing throughout,—which only Nature, and Vandyck—the most intuitive and successful of her mimics—could have so successfully accomplished. In the whole range of the productions of the portrait painter's art, there is nothing finer ;—we had nearly added—nor any thing else of the kind, so fine. But between the best portraits of Titian, and the best of Vandyck's, who shall confer a preference?—Without presuming to do so, we may be permitted to say, that in the present instance, there is not less manifestation than in Titian, of a due portion of that “ senatorial dignity” for which the great Venetian was so justly famed, and which in rendering the features, portrays also the mind, of the original ; while there is more of exquisite taste combined with more of that principiating energy, of mental emanation, which, by seeming to transfuse soul into colours and canvas, makes poetical approximation toward the awful boundary between human and divine creations.

Gevartius, as he now hangs in the National Picture Gallery—ranging with modern works of the same general description ; that is to say, portraits—one at each corner of a quadrangle of pictures—appears so superlative in style and execution, and so splendid in effect, that he makes Jackson turn pale, and nearly extinguishes Reynolds himself. Yet, of the Rev. Holwell Carr, Jackson's is really a very capital likeness, and so is Sir Joshua's of Mr. Windham. Still, however, there is a shining soul in Gevartius, which makes the others seem but like *capita mortua*,—they fade—they disappear from the sphere of Fine Art, like Al-debarân and Sirius, when the sun at the Easter season rises in Taurus.

As the physiognomy of this distinguished Flemish

scholar is intellectual and reflective, we conceive that the reader will naturally desire to know something of the man, and therefore submit the following biographical sketch.

John Gaspar Gevartius was born in the year 1593, and probably at Antwerp; for in the Jesuits' College of that ancient city, he received the earliest rudiments of education: but he afterward studied at Louvain, Douay, and at Paris; in which latter city he resided for several years, dedicating himself chiefly to literary pursuits. Returning to Douay, the degree of doctor of laws was there conferred on him; but he finally established his residence at Antwerp, of which city he became the town clerk, with high reputation as a counsellor, juris-consult, historian, and poet; and died there in the year 1666.

Gevartius was the intimate friend of Rubens and Vandyck, and was often a supper-guest at the table of the former, who seldom paid out-of-door visits, though he not unfrequently received certain select friends of an evening at his own residence (after the labours and studies of the day were over,) of which number were Vandyck and Gevartius. The present admirable work (of which the drapery appears never to have been finished), is therefore a frank emanation and monument of friendship, as well as a triumph of the portrait painter's art. Rubens also painted a three-quarter portrait of this distinguished critic and scholar, which is now in the collection of the Baron Roose of Brussels; and he in his turn performed the melancholy duty of writing the epitaph of his friend Rubens.

“ Here (in our National Gallery) is the likeness then of the friend of these two great artists painted

by one of them, carrying the observer back to the social table of these immortal men; and while telling him that they are now dust, consoling him with the thought that all of them is not dead, and that the most exact reflection is before him, of one of a symposium which kings might have envied."

We quote these last just reflections, partly as a kind of set-off, from "Valpy's National Gallery," a work which we have elsewhere felt compelled to notice with some little reprehension on account of its unfounded pretensions to *picture knowledge*. In *vocabulary* knowledge, and *book-knowledge*, the anonymous writer is not deficient,—far from it: and he unfortunately shares with many others in the erroneous supposition that this will enable him to write of pictures. They have "the trappings and the suits," (if we may be permitted to repeat this Shakspeare text,) but have not "that within which passeth *shew*."

CEPHALUS AND AURORA.

NICCOLO POUSSIN.

NICCOLO POUSSIN is doubtless very great in the treatment of subjects taken from the Old and New Testaments, such as his Moses striking the Rock, Plague of the Philistines, and his Seven Sacraments: all these, as well as numerous others which he had painted from the sacred scriptures, are extraordinary works. It would be well if we had some of them in the National Gallery.

But however admirable these, when he gets among the *classical* scriptures, and has to deal with the

luminous system of elegant allegory which produced and sustained the poetical mythology of Ancient Greece—he is, if possible, still greater. He is, in fact, unequalled, although he has many rivals.

The reason appears to be, that these classical fables, based as they are upon profound contemplation of the phenomena of nature, not only demanded of Poussin the introduction of objects of more intrinsic beauty, but left his *will* more *free* than the sterner truths of religion ; and where the will is most free, the artist always succeeds best. That fascinating species of allegory, of which nature is the light, and mysticism the shadow, and which is a prime element of classic poetry, was congenial with the peculiar character of the imagination of this charming painter ; and through this element, he not only “ played at *will* his virgin fancies,” but oft “ shot forth peculiar graces,” and sported his electric spells with dazzling, or awful, or fascinating effect : and when he got to Italy, and the antique sculpture flashed on his delighted fancy, his plumed wings burst forth from their incipient aurelian cells, and he flew at once to the fountain head of pictorial excellence—at least in the allegorical species of painting which is here under observation : whence his Muse occasionally transported him

“ To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Where the rude axe with heaved stroke
Was never heard, the nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallow'd haunt.”

Such are Poussin's Arcadian forest scenes of the primitive ages. We almost incontinently quote Milton, as we treat of his contemporary and kindred

spirit, Poussin : and the reader may lay his account at presently meeting with more of these parallels, such as Plutarch so advantageously instituted between his heroes ; and of these embracements between the *sister* arts of Painting and Poetry.

A little further on in the *Penseroso* we read that

“ Some strange mysterious dream
Waved at his wings in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd.”

Of this dreamy, and poetical, and beautiful, description, is Poussin's classical Allegory, or Fable, of Cephalus and Aurora. Other painters have represented Aurora flying through the air, and bearing away Cephalus. Poussin saw that this was not the true way of treating the subject, because it conveyed no idea, either literally or analogically, that the fondness of Cephalus for field sports, carried him out into the woodlands *at early dawn*, away from the embraces of his beautiful and beloved wife, which fact is the very foundation of the fable. This learned and introspective artist saw, that instead of carrying the mortal aloft among the clouds, it would be at once more intelligible, more picturesque, and more proper, to bring the goddess down to earth : and to this sentiment we owe the present performance, which, though not his very finest composition of the kind, is still a capital work, and teems with such interesting analogical meaning, as cannot but have emanated from a refined, poetical, and reflective fancy, combined with consummate talent in imitative art.

The figure of Cephalus has been understood to express aversion, or repugnance at least, toward the blandishments and supposed entreaties of Aurora.

It would be more accurate to say he is *unyielding*. But let the critical observer go near to this picture, and look forth intellectually at the fine physiognomy and the profoundly studied, and carefully executed, expression of the Thessalian prince. He will then not fail to perceive, with due admiration, those external signs of contending emotion, which agitate and unnerve his whole frame, and from how delicate a fulcrum the conjugal preponderance is suspended. In the turn of his figure, and the action of his right arm and hand, may be seen that tenderness tempers his repugnance toward Aurora ; but in his face, bent over in contemplation of the beauties of his beloved bride, there is the most heartfelt expression of sincere and intense affection, which lets us at once into his actuating motive, and gives intelligibility and consistency to the apologue. It is *because* his connubial affection is sincere and profound, and not because he is averse to the goddess, that he would for the present estrange himself from her company. Combined as this countenance and figure are, with those of Aurora and the little garlanded emblem of conjugal fidelity, who is holding up the portrait, we cannot but esteem the present group among the triumphant passages of the design of Niccolo Poussin. We seldom praise, or think it necessary to treat of pictures *because* the parts of which they are composed are put together *secundum artem* ; such remarks being almost exclusively for professional artists. A genuine connoisseur does not want to be perpetually peeping behind the scenes. Else we might notice this group of the three nearer and principal figures, as no inapt illustration of the principles of combining the pyramidal with the serpentine form, in historical

groups: a principle which, by the time Poussin arose, had become very prevalent—indeed almost canonical—in Italy.

The charming goddess has thrown her arms passionately around the prince, and *looks* all amorous blandishment and persuasiveness; but there is no sign of vocal utterance, because the discerning painter perceived that *words* would not have been homogeneous with the nature of the legend. There is a delicate antique grace, and an approximation toward superhuman perfection, about the drawing and carnation tints of this fine figure, which cannot but be esteemed extremely interesting and pertinent. Her graceful air of amorous entreaty, is exquisitely tender, and at the same time elevated. The spectator perceives at once that it is no ordinary mortal, or half-frantic bacchante, that is before him, but a superior being of celestial purity, whom, without further evidence or inquiry, you would be ready to take your oath, if necessary, had breakfasted on ambrosia, and would sup with Thetis.

The head of this goddess has merited and obtained the praise of Mr. Ottley; but we think the expression of affectionate regret in the interesting countenance of Cephalus, still finer: there is more of depth and intensity about it. Could Shakspeare's Rosalind have looked at *this* lover, she never would have said of him that "Cupid hath clapped him on the shoulder; but I'll warrant him, heart-whole."

While her saffron-coloured mantle floats loosely, the under-dress of the unveiling Aurora is white. No other colour can, with so much of picturesque and delicate advantage, come in contact with an exquisitely fair and delicate complexion. While that

of the morning goddess has this effect, it harmonizes with the blue drapery of Cephalus, and with the reds that are placed near it.

The garlanded and ruddy little Cupid (or—if the reader pleases—Hymen,—or genius of conjugal fidelity,) who so engagingly holds up the portrait of the absent Procris, has a sweetly innocent character of countenance, blended with a degree of earnestness that is quite delightful—as well in its poetic, as its pictorial, associations. In order to bring the picture sufficiently near the eyes of Cephalus, the little fellow raises himself as much as he can, so that his left foot appears on tip-toe. This is rather an exquisite touch of refinement. And the relative degrees of delicacy of complexion, between the figures of this principal group, and that of the robust river-god who is just beyond, are discriminated with the eye and hand of a consummate master.

The light of the picture, proceeding from the sky and from the dispelling misty exhalations of the distant sea, is with much of artistical address conducted toward the figures. The thin trees near the skirts of that forest which is the scene of the regret of Cephalus, receive some portion of it: they seem emerging from twilight into daylight; the dim haziness which pervades the back and middle grounds, is naturally, as well as poetically, suited to the occasion; and with nice advertence to the analogical meaning which prevails throughout the performance, the first ray of morning catches on the boles of two plane-trees of larger growth than the rest, nearly under which the principal figures are grouped with the car of Aurora: its luminous touches are seen a little above the heads of Aurora and Cephalus.

The delicacy and pertinence of this advertence will not escape the tasteful observer; nor ~~that the~~ lights throughout the picture stream ~~horizontally~~, and are catching; and the shadows ~~long~~, as they are in nature at this early hour.

Milton has a ~~description~~ (in his *Comus*) to which this of Poussin, painted in the very same spirit, is, literally ~~and~~ geographically speaking, the very antipodes, while it is in the most just accordance.

“ — The gilded car of day
His glowing axle doth allay
In the steep Atlantic stream;
And the slope sun, his upward beam
Shoots against the dusky pole,
Pacing tow’rd the other goal
Of his chamber in the East.”

And in his *Paradise Lost*, the same poet has another such advertence which is yet more precisely in point to ~~the~~ present occasion. Adam and Eve, as the reader will probably recollect, advance forth from their shady arbour at this early hour, and

“ Soon as they forth were come to open sight
Of day-spring,—the Sun, who scarce up-risen,
With wheels yet hovering o’er the ocean brim,
Shot parallel to th’ earth his dewy ray.”

Here we see that, in *Comus*, the sun has just set; while in *Paradise Lost*, and in Poussin’s *Cephalus*, he is just rising, and rising just in the same style; being in all the three cases, *personified*. In the picture, as in the poem, we behold the Sun scarce up-risen, with wheels yet hovering o’er the ocean brim; his dewy ray shooting parallel to the horizon, and edging the forest trees; as if the earliest beam of

morning had just alighted there, and the landscape was beginning to feel its genial influence.

Poussin and Milton were contemporaneous, and one would really think that they had held communion, and consulted each other upon these learned and classical occasions. The poet must have visited Italy before he wrote these latter verses, and as Poussin had then recently painted the present work, it seems not at all unlikely that the sight of the picture may have suggested the imagery of the poem. However this may or may not have been, they precisely reflect each other. What Milton has described, Poussin has most exactly painted.

We are aware of the candid acknowledgment of our admirable Moore, that poets know little of pictures : a seeming paradox. With a few exceptions, we believe it to be founded in fact : but among those exceptions we would reckon Milton, Byron, and Goethe. The latter, we have good reason to *know*, had considerable taste for the Arts—and of the right kind too ; and we cannot, among our *pleasures of memory*, but recognise that there is at least one *living* poet in the same pleasurable predicament.

But we have chanced to see certain published and widely circulated mal-observations on this Cephalus and Aurora, by another poet ; and the remainder of our remarks have unluckily got so interwoven and entangled with them, that separation, if it be desirable, seems hopeless. The reader will therefore, as we trust, at least, pardon our presenting him with the tissue, such as it is. In addition to the redeeming light it may throw on the poetry of Poussin's Aurora and Cephalus, it will, as we apprehend, afford

Moore an additional example in proof of his position, though unfortunately coupled with a strong persuasion—or an obedience to some unlucky impulse, to the contrary—on the part of the said poet.

Mr. Cunningham, who has ostensibly set before the public a critical dissertation on the merits of this picture, has remarked—or at least has written—that “there is no vulgar exaggeration in Poussin. All is elegant and beautiful. He was indeed a great master.” After this just acknowledgment of the merits of the master, we must be permitted to express our surprise that Mr. C. should proceed virtually to countervail his own declaration on this point; and, we would add our regret, and—displeasure, (if we might be thought of importance enough to be allowed to express displeasure,) that this *critic*—sinking his own poetical reminiscences—should, after this general praise, have seemed, in his mode of treating the subject, as well as in the sentiments he expresses, to construe the present interesting allegory, as depicted by Poussin, into a mere coarse human intrigue. Can it have been that in the beginning of his critique, he declared sentiments that he had learned from others, and did not himself entertain; and that he afterward forgot that he had said *all* was elegant and beautiful, and that there was *no* vulgar exaggeration? Or how else has this happened? Inconsistencies cannot both be true. The visitors of the National Gallery, if we mistake not, should be guarded against such misconstructions and misinterpretations, by combining and confronting their exposure, with an explanatory exhibition of the truth, as well as with the original picture.

As we understand this classic story, it simply ex-

presses by an apologue, the counter sentiments, or alternations of sentiment, between the attractions of connubial love, and those of woodland sports combined with early rising, as exemplified in the instance of a certain Thessalian prince, and as they became by turns wearisome and exhilarating. But the legend is connected with certain elegant and picturesque analogies, partly resting on meteorological and astro-nomic phenomena,—

Aurora—to use the words of Milton—“with rosy hand, unbarred the gates of light.” She preceded the sun. Night, and sleep, fled before her, and the constellations of heaven disappeared at her approach. Cephalus was ravished with the beautiful power, or powerful beauties, of this goddess, and, like Adonis, delighted in the woodland sports of early morning; of which the enjoyment, however, was occasionally marred by conjugal recollections, and conjugal regrets, proceeding partly from the knowledge that his beautiful and beloved Procris disapproved of his absence. If we did not fear to tarnish the brightness of classic lore by modern breathings, we might familiarly remind our readers, that the same sort of thing occasionally happens now, among the young-married fox-hunters—the Cephaluses of the Berkley hunt, when the bugle calls to the chase, and

“The ruddy Aurora peeps into their rooms.”

If Mr. Cunningham did not know that Aurora was the personified ruddy day-spring—the harbinger of the sun; but thought she was some other *bonny lassie*, was he qualified to write of Poussin? In this case, is it fitting—is it for the public advantage, that so many newspapers—the intelligent Spectator among

them—should laud him as the writer of all others, eminently qualified to treat of the Fine Arts? If, on the contrary, Mr. C. did know this, (and it is very difficult to suppose him destitute of such ordinary information,) why does he assume ignorance, and write absurdly?—But halt! my Muse. It will be better to show cause for indignation than to seem indignant; and to this end, we must, in the first place, bring the reader acquainted with our contemporary's leading sentiments and opinions on the subject of Cephalus and Aurora—

“ Other painters (says he) have delineated on ceilings, Aurora carrying her lover through the air; [this fact he seems to have copied from the first line of Mr. Ottley's critique—but that is of no consequence.] Poussin desired to add *sentiment*, and pictured *them* on the *ground*, *awakened by the morning light*.” Which is to say, that Poussin has pictured *the morning light*, as well as Cephalus, as *awakened by the morning light*—a bit of nonsense, of which the critic does not appear to be aware. He proceeds, “ Reflection seems to have come upon Cephalus with *the dawn*; thoughts of Procris rush upon his fancy: he turns from *the goddess*, who, with arms around him, endeavours by gentle force, and probably pleasant *words*, to hinder his departure. He regards neither her looks, which diffuse gladness and light on all things else; nor the *sly industry of an intriguing Cupid*, who is *spreading the couch* for Aurora; but fixes his eyes *ruefully* on the portrait of his wife, held up to him by an urchin god, who may be supposed to represent domestic Love. The winged *steed of the morning is at hand*.”

This short paragraph contains about half a dozen

errors and absurdities. 1st, How came the dissertator to know, or to suppose, that Poussin's motive or reason for painting Aurora and Cephalus on *the ground* was to *add sentiment*? Why did he suppose the artist believed the air was no vehicle for sentiment, and the ground was? Why does Mr. C. himself fancy so? 2d, Our contemporary, though himself a poet, seems to forget, or to attempt to cancel, the poetry of his and Poussin's subject, when he writes of Aurora, and "the dawn," as being separate existences. He obviously should not have treated of "them on the ground awakened by the morning light," because this is plainly assuming the absurdity, that she, before whom Nox and Somnus fly, has been herself sleeping with Cephalus in a wood. Beside—granting our contemporary's statement, that an amorous couple had here been aroused by the dawn, and were quitting their nocturnal couch, why should an intriguing Cupid be painted as *spreading* the couch? To prepare the couch, when they are preparing to leave it, would have been but fresh inconsistency. 3d, Since Aurora *was* the dawn, and nothing but the dawn, personified, there is still more inconsistency in his writing of thoughts of Procris rushing upon his fancy *with the dawn*. The former error is kept up. The simple solution of the enigma, or fable, being, that beautiful ruddy mornings, allured and detained this hunting prince, from the embraces of his lovely wife (Procris); yet that the thoughts of her would sometimes present themselves; occasion regrets; and prevent his out-of-door enjoyment of the beautiful mornings. Wherefore—as reflections (and of a very agreeable kind too) do sometimes dawn upon our friend Allan, as well as on Cephalus,

we hope he will perceive how much he has deteriorated the poetry of his subject. 4th, We would say the same of his "gentle force and probably pleasant *words* of Aurora." 5th, What Mr. C. calls "the sly industry of an intriguing Cupid, who is spreading the couch for Aurora;"—should our contemporary deny the egregious ignorance or inadvertency that we are imputing to him,—will prove to be merely the sly industry of a vocabulist. Every person who looks at this fine picture with any discernment, may perceive that no couch is being spread; but that the simple painted truth here is, that Love is disclosing the charms of Aurora, by removing a veil—a dark veil, as it ought to be, Aurora being by an analogy so pertinent and plain, that those who run might read it, to be regarded as nocturnally veiled. There is a beautiful text in the book of Job bearing precisely the same meaning. 6th, Another little Love, or *Cupidon*, holds up the picture of Procris: which is to say, in the language of painting, that while one species of affection unveils, and reveals to Cephalus the beauty of the morning,—another—(connubial Love)—successfully reveals the features of his beauteous wife, upon whose portrait he does not fix his eyes *ruefully*, but, as we have before expressed, with the most tender affection. And when we come to reflect that the painter had to convey his allegorical meaning, through the sense of vision, we do not see by what authority the poet of Dalwinston is privileged—or supposed himself privileged—to treat, as a "blemish in the composition, the *conceit* (as he calls it) of the Cupid showing Cephalus the portrait of his wife, in order to recall him to his allegiance;" or privileged to add that "the contrivance is an

awkward one," unless he had at the same time pointed out a better, that would have consisted with the rest of the composition. Mr. C. must surely know full well, that

A *gen'rous* critic reads each work of wit
With the same spirit that its author writ.

And we are grieved—the generous and tasteful part of the public must be grieved—at beholding such a man, biased by professional preferences and partialities, and grasping at occasions to celebrate—or, at least, assert—the triumphs of the pen over the pencil. If Wilkie were really Hogarth, Cunningham would not escape the retort courteous. But—Wilkie is his countryman.

We are the less reluctant in exposing these unsound pretensions to criticism and picture-knowledge, inasmuch as the reader has seen from our remarks on the Bacchus and Ariadne of Titian, [we could adduce many others,] that the present is by no means a solitary instance of a *vulgar apprehension of divine things*, and of an attempt to debase those divine things to that vulgar standard.

Eneas knew his mother, though in disguise, by the graceful waving of her hair, and the fine turn of her neck, and revered the goddess accordingly: our contemporary treats such personages as Ariadne and Aurora, even when they appear before him without disguise, and in all the beauty which the pencils of Titian and Poussin could bestow, as no better than pot-girls or mud-larks. Ariadne “throws down her mantle and pitcher, and *flies*, plucking higher a part of her lower dress as she *runs*, and showing a shapely leg;” yet “the artist has put no more life

and mettle into her heels than a young woman would wish for in running away from a very handsome god :” and Aurora—as this critical dissertator fancies, with coarse irrelevance—“ is employing pleasant *words* [forsooth] and an *intriguing* Cupid, to spread her couch on the ground.” Meanwhile the whole puffing tribe are induced to sing forth in assumed ecstasies, Glory be to thee, O Allan Cunningham !—thou art the very first of picture-critics.

Are there no literary Hells in the parish of St. James? As this Cuning-game has now been playing off for some years at the public expense, and to its enormous loss, we have deemed it right not to be withheld by any commonplace cant about personality, &c. from declaring, and from showing, that there is *lead* in the dice that certain traders in the arts of criticism, and in criticisms on the Arts, have so long been winning with.

To revert to Poussin’s Cephalus,—Mr. C. is “ not at all disposed to dispute the taste of Aurora in spreading her couch by the side of a romantic stream :” where—be it known to all those whom it may concern, that—*no* couch is spreading. On our contemporary’s own previous assertion, no couch would or could be spreading, just as Cephalus has risen to depart. But suppose that the personified Love (or *Cupidon*, as the French say), who is in reality, symbolically *unveiling* the beauties of Nature, as the ruddy light streams from the eastward, *had* been spreading a couch ; and suppose that Aurora had been merely the common wench that our critic would inculcate—the *taste* (which Mr. C. is not at all disposed to dispute) of spreading a couch—a genial couch, on the dank earth, close to the brink

of a river, before sun-rise, cannot be much commended. We have indeed heard of the hardy Highlanders of Scotland, who sleep out among the mountains and glens, steaming through their tartan plaids, at this early hour, but have not learned to be sufficiently Scottish, to be charmed with the chilling "*taste*" of such romanticity. But, to what does this romantic stream—personified by our artist, allude? Why—in order to indicate the early hour—or to accord with it rather—Poussin has introduced, just beyond his principal group, a river-god as not conscious of day-light—as literally "sleeping o'er his urn;" and a little farther on in the picture, upon higher ground, appears a Naiad, with her smaller vase beside her, who is just awakening: the allegoric meaning—delicately, but efficiently expressed—is that mountain streamlets glitter in the early morning light, while the deeper river-beds are yet in the dark. But instead of this simple, and pretty obvious explication of a depicted allegory, Mr. Cunningham's illustration is mere vapid, verbal display. He writes, "a *Fountain* deity slumbers over his urn, unconscious of *what is doing beside him*, and a *Nymph* starts from her couch [where there is neither couch nor Nymph, but a bank and a Naiad]—starts from her couch, and gazes dazzled on the brightening *sky*." Now, as the face of the *Naiad* is averted from the spectator, being seen in somewhat less than profile, and turned toward the rising sun-light, we should be glad to know how Mr. C. came to perceive that her eyes were dazzled? And further, how he came *not* to perceive—or not to mention—what confers so much intelligent meaning on the whole allegorical fable; namely, that, in that brightening sky, *the shadowy*

form of Phæbus, rising and urging onward his steeds, is distinctly traceable. This beautiful and highly poetical passage of the picture, the poet has entirely omitted to mention : instead thereof, informing his readers that, “ The winged steed of the morning *is at hand*.”—But he who inspects the picture with ordinary attention (to say nothing of critical discernment), will presently see that the *car of Aurora*—another article, which, though it confers so much meaning on the whole composition, is left entirely unheeded by this accomplished critical dissertator—The *car of Aurora*, partially seen beyond her shoulder, is attached to this *Pegasus*, in which circumstance, most observers of any taste, would recognise something of delicate indication of a poetic flight on the part of the artist, as well as on that of the goddess. *Neither the car of Phæbus, nor that of Aurora, appears to have been perceived by the historical and critical describer!* Not perceived? No: not even perceived; though they are just as distinctly painted as they ought to be.

Now, there is a time, lasting for some weeks, in every year, when the asterism Pegasus in the Thesalian latitudes, rising just before the sun, becomes immersed in his morning radiance, and may therefore—almost without a metaphor—be said to be harnessed to the car of Aurora. But though we think with Lord Verulam concerning the enigmatic meaning of some of the old Grecian fables, we are not about to blame or dispraise our critic for not adverting to this heliacal rising of the stars of Pegasus, being uncertain whether Poussin himself intended such recondite advertence. If he did, the winged horse is here introduced with twofold pertinence;

and something of mystical wit, mingles itself with the celestial wisdom of the artist.

Upon an occasion where astronomic phenomena were necessarily connected with his allegory, Poussin might have ventured on this scientific allusion—we hope, without the reproach of pedantry—else heaven help ourselves; but it may perhaps be esteemed rather a curious local coincidence, that in the far-off age of Cephalus, this heliacal rising of the stars in question, annually took place between the times of the sun's arrival at the brumal solstice, and his arrival at the vernal equinox, which was, most likely, the sporting season of Thessaly.

Uncertain as we are upon this point, we merely wish to enable the reader to render unto Poussin the things that are Poussin's, according to the reader's judgment: and are very far from imputing blame to our contemporary for not noticing the dubious *astronomy* of the subject. Even with regard to the *poetry* of the subject, which is not dubious, it had perhaps been most charitable and most prudent in us, to suppose inadvertency on the part of the critic, and that he did not, at the moment he was writing his comments, happen to think of analogically identifying the rosy-fingered goddess with the rising day, &c. &c.

And most certainly we had put this milder construction upon his criticism, and had done so perhaps in silence, had we not met with errors of the same kind, more or less gross, but set forth with the same assurance—we had nearly written, literary audacity—almost wherever we have opened Mr. C.'s writings upon Art and artists. How with his darkness he has dared to affront Titian's light, the reader has seen,

and will judge of the propriety of our vindicating from *such* criticism, the noble works placed in the National Gallery. The well-merited reputations of such artists, as Titian and Poussin, are not to suffer detriment because a certain public writer happens to be inattentive, or ignorant and over bold : nor can *he* be fit to write upon any subject, *for the Public*, that

“ With mean compliance would betray his trust ;
Or be so civil as to prove unjust ;
Or fears the anger of the wise to raise.”

A CLASSICAL LANDSCAPE.

NICCOLO POUSSIN.

MR. CUNNINGHAM appears, by some adverse circumstances—adverse, we mean, to the public advantage—to have been tossed out of his proper element. Such accidents are not unfrequent among those of human life, and are much to be regretted when men of talent, as well as the public pleasure and improvement, are involved in the consequences ; consequences, too often occasioned, as we fear, by the mercenary cupidity of those to whom literature is a commodity. In the local legendary lore of the Scottish glens, and in the superstitions of the Highlands, Mr. C. seems learned, and his poetry and Scottish stories are highly interesting and instructive : whether he has volunteered into other regions, or been compelled thither by adverse gales, we cannot tell ; but, as the poet opines,

“ One Science only will one genius fit,
So vast is Art ; so narrow human wit.”

There are some few exceptions we know ; but our contemporary's knowledge of Art and artists, is so superficial, and his temerity so great, that he is not only in perpetual danger of shipwreck, but his log-book and reports are so full of erroneous hydrographical notices, that he endangers sober and trusting navigators who may think to follow him.

His traverse sailing has brought him athwart some isolated few of our National Gallery subjects ; but he has encountered them so transiently, and under such Scottish mists, that he has scarcely ever quitted them without hanging out false signals : not that he designs to mislead, but from sheer ignorance of painting and superficiality of observation—at least that is the most charitable conclusion we are able to arrive at.

We are here vindicating Poussin ; concerning the philosophy of whose talents, as far as a general remark goes, our contemporary may easily be tracked through Thompson's snow. The poet has pronounced him "learned," as placed in apposition to Salvator Rosa, in a verse which Mr. C. has twice quoted in the course of his few pages on pictures contained in the National Gallery. So far, so good (not that the "savage Rosa" was *unlearned*) : but the Cephalus and Procris—notwithstanding that it is far more "learned" than his critic has ever dreamed of—not coming up to the mark of Poussin's reputation in the estimation of that critic—which is only saying in other words that it does not come *down* to the level of *his* capacity for judging.—This being the case, Mr. C. kindly thinks to fill up the vacant measure, by an advertence to his noble classical landscape wherein is introduced the story of Polyphemus in love with Galatea, a glorious Sicilian scene, with

which almost everybody is acquainted through the engravings that have been done after it. As far as the critic's *intention* goes, this advertence is well principled. If we did not think so, we should not ourselves be here doing the very same thing—

Poussin was one of the earliest landscape painters, and in all that concerns *classical* scenery was the very best: and as our only *landscape* from his pencil (contained in the National Gallery) appears to have had its middle tints somewhat darkened by time, or perhaps by inexperienced priming, and is not, when spoken of in the aggregate, to be regarded as his *best* work of the kind—although excellent—it seems but common good-nature, in treating of it, to remind the reader that there are still better in existence.

One of the inscriptions in Shenstone's pleasure-grounds (to a deceased or absent female friend) was, "Ah, Maria! How much inferior is the presence and conversation of others, to the bare recollection of thee!" There is a peculiar charm of melancholy pleasure in this tribute of regret paid to absent excellence. The tasteful connoisseur, who has even slight acquaintance with the poetry of Bion and Theocritus, has the same feeling when he recollects the Sicilian scenes—such as that containing Galatea and the piping Cyclop—from the pencil of Poussin:

" —The gales that from them blow,
A momentary bliss bestow:
The weary soul they seem to sooth,
And, redolent of joy and youth—
He breathes life's second spring."

But so hasty, or uninformed, or unobservant; and so temerarious, is our dissertating contemporary, that even his short advertence to this admirable work,

abounds with error and mistatement: yet is it put forth with the same degree of confidence that very properly awaits his pen when treating of the glen-legends of his native land. He writes, "We remember his (Poussin's) picture of Polyphemus piping on a mountain *to his flocks scattered along the acclivity*, the *blind* giant is seated on the summit; the sound of his pipe seems to soothe him; *his herds are not unconscious of the melody*"—

Now, we ought not to forget that our contemporary has before reproached others with drawing up memoirs of artists "with the hurried indifference of men writing for bread;" adding, "Of these works, some are concise and barren; others, overflowing *and* diffuse, and *all* are more or less liable to be charged with *inaccuracy of criticism; with describing what ought to be, rather than delineating what is.*"

Whether Mr. Cunningham has done either of these?—whether he has done more or less than those whom he reprehends?—whether he has described what ought to be? or, has delineated what is?—the reader shall presently judge. With "inaccuracy of criticism" he is certainly chargeable. But of this also the reader shall judge for himself.

He calls Polyphemus a *blind* giant; and says that he is piping on a mountain *to his flocks scattered along the acclivity*, and that they are *not unconscious of the melody*. Now, he is obviously piping (on the syrinx) to the listening nymphs, whose attention is suddenly called off from his music by the sly approach of two Satyrs, with the principal of these nymphs (Galatea) the giant is in love; but, with regard to his flocks, there are *none scattered along the acclivity*. Deep in the vale beneath, there is a

shepherd and *his* flock (not the flock of Polyphemus), but the sheep are mere pin-point specks; so that in saying, they are *not unconscious of the melody*—but enough of this exposure: let the reader determine here whether Mr. C. “describes what ought to be, or delineates what is?” or has seen what he pretends to describe?—And with regard to the piping Polyphemus being *blind*—if common sense did not inform the critic that the giant was *not* blind, every Eton or Westminster schoolboy could have so informed him.

But our poetical, though uncritical, contemporary, upon such occasions, instead of referring to the classical authorities, looks into Dibdin’s song-book. He did so in the affair of Titian’s Bacchus and Ariadne—and the consequence has been, that having therein read concerning Polyphemus, that Ulysses

“Ate his mutton—drank his wine,
And then, he—poked his eye out,”

he has not, even with Poussin’s print before him, been able to divest himself of the idea that the Cyclop was *blind*, although it is pretty well known that, after wooing and piping to Galatea, he hurled a rock with such precision as to crush poor Acis, her favoured lover, without hurting Galatea herself, notwithstanding they were at the time engaged in an amorous colloquy.

We need not, and we do not, dwell further upon these facts and assertions, because, south of the Tweed—we are here placing the matter apart from all especial reference to the classic poets—south of Nova Zembla (we might say), who is not acquainted with Gay’s beautiful pastoral oratorio on the subject of Acis and Galatea? Who has not heard with

rapture the sublime music which it suggested to Handel? And who can have forgotten it?

When a public writer reproaches others with "inaccuracy of criticism;" with "describing what ought to be, rather than delineating what is; and with the hurried indifference of men writing for bread," it is due to the public and to all parties concerned, to place in juxtaposition thereto, the results of the castigated care of his own literary opulence and ease.

But it is time to revert to Niccolo Poussin.

The majestic style of landscape invented and expanded into practice by Niccolo Poussin, has been effected on the same principles as, or on principles in close analogy with, those of the Roman school of historical painting—and of historical writing, we might add—that is to say, by somewhat enlarging and dwelling upon the nobler features, and by suppressing, or faintly recognising the existence of, the inferior parts, or minor details; so that the cultivated imagination of the connoisseur, has the delight of feeling where to dwell and luxuriate, and freely expand its wings and soar, unretarded by those pettinesses of unimproved perception, which necessarily attend on its infantile and unfledged efforts; and thus arrives at the (generalised) truth and wisdom contained in the artist's well-constructed sentences, without having occasion to dwell individually upon those detailed particulars with which it is already sufficiently familiar; as, in rapidly collecting the general meaning of a verse or a literary sentence, we in great measure lose microscopic sight of the individual words and elementary characters of which it is constituted. Instead of the topographical touch and minute exactitude of the Dutch masters,

or of the antiquarian or botanical draftsman,—which has its charms and its wide range of utility, although of a distinct species—we behold in the works of Poussin (as is intimated above) an *historical* mode or style of landscape-painting. The artist is no longer an annalist, like Suetonius, but an historian, like Tacitus or our own Gibbon.

And we may further remark that, like these, Poussin has an art of throwing his matter, as it were, into a few terse and dignified sentences or paragraphs, so that the mind of the tasteful spectator feels a sympathetic glow and elevation as it attends to them, just as in reading the works of the eloquent historians who are named above. Particularly to explain how this has been technically accomplished, would be too much to address ourselves to students in painting, and belongs not to our present subject or purpose. But minds attuned to poetry and elocution will readily apprehend that a few bold contrasts, like those of Poussin, based on sound principles of generalisation; like an energetic and pertinent literary antithesis, are far more impressively affecting, than that laboured prolixity of detail, which we so often see proceeding from the over solicitude of those painters or writers, who address the sense rather than the imagination. Something antithetical indeed there is, in that principle which we not unfrequently trace in the landscape compositions of this artist, where long, regular, and unbroken lines or forms, are alternated with such as are short and irregular; and passages of wild nature, with the disciplined artificialities of human invention.

Poussin's landscapes are not so *beautiful* as those of Claude; nor so *picturesque* as those of Ruysdael; nor so *romantic* as those of Salvator Rosa; but they

are more *noble* than either. Perfectly unsophisticated, and sufficiently elevated above vulgar, or common nature, they appear scenes suited to grand and solemn transactions. They have power to rekindle those trains of imagery—those antique associations, which imaginations at all versed in classic lore, have long since treasured up. Although it may be said that inanimate Nature never grows old; or, bears no chronological markings on her face,—yet, despite of this conviction, Poussin has discovered and employed the means of extracting and excluding from his landscape compositions, all modern ideas. You are led to fancy as you gaze, that his pictures cannot have been painted later than the days of Sophocles and Euripides. So successfully do they carry back the mind into remote antiquity, that, in the instance before us, you are more than half persuaded that the next figures, or characters, who will enter on the scene, will be Œdipus and his admirable daughter; or, perhaps, Cassandra the prophetess. You incontinently whisper to yourself that, “Assuredly we are here introduced into the precinct of some ancient and classic city—Thebes, Argos, Mycenæ, or Sparta, where the weary traveller on his arrival finds the means of ablution in the overflow of a marble fountain, and finds a grove sacred to the tutelary, or protecting, deity of the district.” At the left hand corner, we behold this traveller draped in yellow, bathing his feet ere he paces the holy ground: and could we wend round the corner on the right hand—round the foot of the pedestal of the ruined monumental column, we firmly persuade ourselves that we should behold there the temple of Jupiter, Minerva, or of some other guardian deity.

You are taught to fancy that the graceful figure clad in white, is proceeding from the river (of which a single reach winds through the landscape) toward the temple, after purifying the peplum, or dress of the priestess; and when your eye wanders onward to the bole of a tree which terminates the grove to the left, and you behold there an inscribed tablet—a votive offering, perhaps,—and the simulacra of *two* patron deities, you scarcely entertain a doubt that the grove is sacred to Castor and Pollux, or the twins of Latona. If to the former, Sparta is the city of which **you perceive a suburb at a distance**, backed by lofty and cloud-capped mountains. A prostrate devotee is reclining beneath the tree, while another meditative figure, clad in red drapery, is approaching.

Poussin, more than any other painter of landscape, has successfully assimilated the broken and irregular forms of rough ground, rocks, and trees, with architectural regularity, and length of line; and in the present work, the harmonious contrast which is thus produced, cannot but impress the student with profound respect for the mind which conceived and acted upon principles so simple and efficient. It is by means of the occult relations which *he discovered* between these two elementary principles, that his grand graphic edifices are constructed; that his variegated unity is produced; and that he is justly esteemed the founder or architect of that majestic style of landscape which is almost identified with his name.

The grove which he has here depicted, is of noble growth; but the trees are not oaks. Their branching is not lateral enough, and their foliage is too pendent for that of the oak: neither are they ash, poplar, or

elm: plane, ilex, or chestnut, they may possibly be intended for, but we rather find them to be so generalised as to be esteemed simply forest trees.

The man and woman engaged in some interesting conversation and seated on the ground, at the foot of a monumental column overhung with foliage, are admirably composed—two landscape-figures better suited to their situation, we know not where to find, and the local and positive colours of their draperies, confer due repose on the abounding verdure and neutral tints of the groves.

As Mr. Ottley has well observed, “Niccolo has so judiciously varied the tints of the ground, of the masonry, of the fountain, and the monumental structure opposite to it, as well as the colours of the dresses, that there is, altogether, no want of variety in the colouring of the picture; whilst, at the same time, great solemnity of effect is occasioned in it by the trees, vigorous and full of leaf, being represented all of the same dark hue.”

To conclude: the sentiment of majestic simplicity with which we are here impressed, pervades nearly all the landscapes of Nicholas Poussin, and while it captivates, expands, the tasteful and sympathetic mind. Something there is, about his works of this description, almost immediately productive of a contemplative mood in the beholder: something of erudite sanctity, which, like the Greek tragedies, elevates and transports us far away from present times and places, and incontinently throws the imagination back toward the best ages of antiquity.

This picture was presented to the nation by the late Sir George Beaumont.

A BACCHANALIAN DANCE;
OR, RURAL REJOICING OF THE GOLDEN AGE.

NICCOLO POUSSIN.

DURING the first residence of Poussin at Paris, and while he was struggling to get from thence to Italy, he became acquainted with the Chevalier Marino, an Italian poet of some temporary celebrity, who had a taste for pictures. "Men of genius understand each other, and agree well together, when the Arts they practise are dissimilar:" and as the infirmities of the poet obliged him to keep much to his bed, and as Poussin was, at the time (and indeed at all times) a close domestic student, the poet and painter, inhabiting the same house, were much in each other's society. They not unfrequently read poetry together, and mutually listened to each other's remarks.

"From this period it is (says the French biographer of Poussin) that we are to date his decided taste for poetical compositions, in which nymphs, satyrs, and shepherds are the principal characters, and also his deep and various knowledge of subjects derived from fable and history." Local circumstances, adverse to the wishes and the professional progress of the painter, separated these friends for awhile; but they afterwards met at Rome, where the poet introduced Poussin to Cardinal Barberini and some other distinguished characters; but proceeding onward to Naples, Marino died there, and left the painter destitute—excepting the wealth he possessed in his own rich attainments.

Marino has, by an excellent judge of our own

country, who is himself well versed in the Art, been deemed one of the first corrupters of the fine Italian taste for poetry which prevailed during the preceding century : but, if so, the taint reached not to Poussin. It happened between these friends, as it sometimes happened in the concerns of the ancient theatre, where action was assigned to one player, or *mime*, and utterance to another ; and where, while the vocalist performed ill, the *panto-mime* was admirable. And on the whole, it would appear, that the conversation of Marino operated as little else than an index, pointing the mind of the artist toward the beauties and merits of the Greek *poets, perhaps* ; but *certainly* toward those of the Greek *relievos* that were of contemporaneous production ; and that to this latter source, next to the emanations of his own genius, we owe the finest exertions of the talents of this great master in the art of painting.

Most of the deities and sub-deities of the classic mythology, consisted of the various energies of Nature, personified by Art. The science, or system of rules, which regulated this personification, was at once the leading motive and principle of the loftier aims of the Grecian artists, and gave rise to that variety of fine forms—each with its system of homogeneous or consistent parts—which we trace in their heroic and mythological sculptures with such just admiration. Poussin, though transposed into a posterior age, was of the same race, and in his Bacchanalian dance, we behold personifications of those rural powers who were supposed to rejoice hilariously at the season of the vintage,

“ When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous PAN.”

A terminal sculptured figure of this deity, horned, in token of his sylvan rusticity, and richly garlanded with flowers and verdure, stands not far from the fore-ground. Here a jocund group of the rural powers have assembled, and are dancing with wild delight, as if thoroughly sensible that enjoyment was obedience to the will of the gods. The whole scene is Arcadian. Woody hills are at a distance, from which fountains are gushing: blue mountains are beyond; and the nearer background is of sycamore and plane-trees, tinged with autumnal hues, and festooned with the vine. The dancers consist of four Wood-nymphs, or Bacchantes; two Bacchanals, or perhaps Fauns (though their tails are not visible); and three or four chubby sylvan boys. The composition abounds in picturesque and poetic incident. One of the Wood-nymphs, elastic in her form and attitude, although engaged in the dance, contrives, in passing, to squeeze grapes into the wine-cup of a little thirsty soul who eagerly reaches for it, while another less favoured little curly-pated rogue would share the boon: a third boy has fallen down, having already had too much of the delicious beverage; and a fourth, having climbed the side of a large sculptured vase, is stooping his head in a style that Anacreon, or Dr. Henderson, might envy, in order to partake without stint or measure of the exhilarating contents of the mighty bowl, and leaving us room to hope that he will not prove a votary at the shrine of Bacchus, initiated by *immersion*.

The expressive heads of the dancing revellers are entwined with vine and ivy leaves: garlands of flowers bestrew the ground, and seem the destined prizes of the species of sportive contention that is

proceeding. The principal male figure of the group is a sort of Faun, slightly habited in yellow drapery : His head bound with ivy, and his rubicund face and figure, replete with "tipsy dance and jollity," is almost beaming with mirthful enjoyment. In threading the mazes of the dance, this figure passes under the uplifted arms of the sprightly and rosy nymph, and of a naked swain, also of athletic form and energetic action, who has "knit hands" on the other side, with a second Bacchante, and is painted with masterly ability. Of the former female it has been publicly, and perhaps hastily, said, that "she might challenge criticism, were it not for certain touches of vermilion upon her features, unbecoming the complexion of so young a female."—Yes, unbecoming at Almack's ; but is she not a Bacchante, and of the golden age, "while yet there was no fear of Jove?"

But the most prominent, if not the most poetic, incident, in the whole composition, is, that an intrusive Satyr has rushed in a wild freak from some neighbouring thicket or circumjacent grove, and, dashing with dissonance the harmony of the meeting, has interrupted the regularity of the dance; by clasping a fallen nymph who has just been tripped down—perhaps by his unceremonious rudeness, and who with the finest arch expression of Theocritan coquetry in the world, is half averting, half inviting, a kiss. Meanwhile another nymph would, with her brass vase, batter the Satyr's head, for the naughty trick ; and a third would perhaps also obtain a Satyrical kiss for preventing this assault and battery : but all in sport, of course—the whole is no more than the wild joke of a moment.

This Bacchanalian dance, or trait of the golden

age, is a fine specimen of a peculiar talent, or manifestation, in Art, in the exercise of which Poussin is far beyond all his competitors; for, beside the technic merits of his masterly drawing, his extraordinary ability in composition, and the consecutive simultaneousness of the incidents he has brought together—here is a certain pervading antique physiognomy, exceedingly gratifying to the eye of Taste, which, though easy to see, it would be difficult to describe; and in the production of which Poussin has hitherto proved inimitable.

The characters he introduces into these *Anacreontics*, are always homogeneous in themselves, as well as consistent with respect to time and place. They are always engaged in some necessary and appropriate action; and seem to be as obedient to his beck, as if he were intimately acquainted with every shepherd of the plain, every sylvan sub-deity, every naiad of the streams, and every dryad of the groves—

“ The oak-crown’d sisters, and their chaste-eyed queen,
Satyrs and sylvan boys, are seen
Peeping from forth their alleys green;”

and ready to be honoured by a call to his canvas.
Or if he rather chose to thread the mazes of their
local haunts, like Comus of old, he

“ —knew each lane,
Dingle, or bushy dell, of their wild woods;
And every bosky bourn from side to side:
His daily walks and ancient neighbourhood.”

Even in the peculiar colour which Poussin employed—as every observing spectator must have remarked—on these classical subjects, there is something original, bold, and appropriate: an appropriation, how-

ever, which no artist before him had perceived (save the occasional glimpses of Titian). We mean here that prevailing *adust* complexion, which marks the pictures which he painted about the middle period of his life—a certain pervading brownish-yellow tone, which, whilst it opposes his blue skies, blue hills, and blue draperies, with a result so efficient, satisfies us that no transaction, real or supposed, of our own humid climate, is presented to our notice; but something remotely foreign. This tone is in close communion—in mental concord, we might say—with his antique forms and mythological legends, and helps to persuade the spectator that he is transported to a tropical climate, and that they are old Greek works of art, coeval, or nearly so, in their production, with mythological metamorphoses and Bacchanalian festivals, that are set before him.

On reading over what is written above, we perceive that the refinements—which may be truly so termed—that were attendant on the pencil of Pous-sin, and upon the knowledge and selection that must have guided and governed its movements—are not sufficiently dwelt upon. We intended our Catalogue to be explanatory (where explanation was needed) as well as critical and descriptive; and, having mentioned the advantages which Niccolo derived from the pictures of Titian and the conversation of Marino, it is the more incumbent upon us to state also the germinations of his own genius, and the gelid influences of the soil wherein it was planted.

It was therefore not enough to say his terminal figure (constituting the shrine) of Pan, was horned and wreathed with garlands. We should have told *why* it is horned and wreathed, and has a joyous

character: which is simply an analogical and pictorial mode of expressing that a diviner existence is superinduced on the wild or rustic energies of Nature, and that the flowers of poetry breathe their odours around the coalition.

The picture firmly persuades us, that had Poussin been called upon to paint a living PAN, he would not, like Annibale Caracci, have represented him with human legs [Caracci, however, may have done this merely to compliment a certain corpulent music-master]; but with goats' legs, as we find him in the allegory which Rubens presented to King Charles: and this he would have done as a further exemplification of the same meaning, and a further manifestation that Pan was (and therefore should still be in our painted poems) regarded as the emblematic deity of universal Nature:—that is to say—of Nature as it *is*, with all its divinity, mingled with all its grossness. Such was the Pan of the Greeks; and Nicholas Poussin was the artist, of all others, to know and feel these sentiments—of all others, save and except our own Milton, who was his contemporaneous, and whom you would swear—had not our countryman written his *Comus* before he went to Italy—had seen and admired the present picture, or the more uproarious revel which now hangs in the same room—when he wrote

“ —of riot, and ill-managed merriment,
Stirr'd up among the loose unletter'd hinds,
When, for their teeming flocks and granges full,
In wanton dance they praise the bounteous Pan,
And thank the gods amiss.—”

But was it *amiss* thus to thank the god Pan, by

festive dance?—A moot point this, concerning which authorities are at variance.

Even according to European notions of much later date, Yorick granted to those who gather grapes—not indeed in Ionia or Arcadia, but in the south of France—that a cheerful dance was “the best thanks that an illiterate peasant could pay—or a learned prelate either.” And we may not forget that we are here transported amid Arcadian or Sicilian scenes, when and where Pan was worshiped as a personification of all-bounteous Nature—of no purified or abstract principle (of nature), but of Existence—animated Existence, in the gross, or aggregate. This is the reason why Pan—though his superior parts were human—was represented with the legs of a goat.

And all the sylvan creations of Poussin, including his sublime Polyphemus, are called into being upon homogeneous principles. Being perfectly unsophisticated, his shepherds, fauns, nymphs, satyrs, and bacchanals, appear a primitive progeny, and the native inhabitants of the mountains and woodlands of the genial climate of Greece, and of that golden age, when Hellas and Asia Minor may be supposed to have been overspread by aboriginal forests, and life was careless resignation to present enjoyment, “where no misgiving is.”

In all his Bacchanalian or Anacreontic subjects—of which abandonment to the joys of love and wine constitutes the essence, this delectable artist seems—but only seems—to throw the reins of Reason upon the neck of Imagination. Mr. Payne Knight says, there was a description of erotic poets, who combining the refinements of sentimental love, which they ac-

quired amidst the elegancies of the most polished society, with the manners of primeval simplicity, and the imagery of pastoral life, have called into being a race of mortals utterly unknown to Nature, yet rendered credible by Art. Of this description are the Cyclops and Swains [of course he must have meant to include the Nymphs, Satyrs, and Fauns of antiquity, also] of the elegant Theocritus; who, bred in the polished court of Syracuse, and writing in the still more polished court of the second Ptolemy, gave a new character to his own delicate sentiments of love, by expressing them in the archaic simplicity of dialect, or with the native rusticity of imagery, of Sicilian peasants; and the novelty of that character, the simplicity of that dialect, and the beauty and gaiety of that imagery, naturally rendered the sentiments expressed, more pleasing and impressive.

Anacreon had done this, with certain modifications, long before Theocritus; and this is very much what Poussin has since done in painting—with the important difference, that, instead of being contemplated as “utterly unknown to nature,” the painter charms us, more completely than the poets had done, into the belief that his imagery is better known to Nature than even to Poetry. Simple pleasures are persuasive; and the love of novelty, when sanctioned by the consciousness of truth, nature, and innocence, effectually bears down the force of habit. The prolific trains of joyous ideas and emotions connected with the imagery of Poussin, therefore, charms us into the willing belief that the artificialities and restraints of that modern society where ourselves are stationed, are, in fact, the sophisticated and fictitious things, obstructing the clearness of our native perceptions, and re-

pugnant alike to nature and good taste. Even Saint Gregory, and other fathers of the church, have occasionally lapsed, or sprung, away from their theological studies, to write Anacreontics; and the greatest of our epic poets appears to agree with our Anacreontic painter, that "Nature wantons when in her prime," and that to be "wild without rule or art," is "enormous bliss."

Poussin's own trials during the earlier part of his professional career, were somewhat severe: his intellectual gold was kept rather of the longest in the crucible of adversity. To feel ~~pleasurable excitement~~ seldom fell to ~~the lot of his~~ youth; but when it did arrive, he doubtless felt it the more intensely. It reached his heart; and he was the more intensely conscious of his own inherent capabilities. As these were seldom called into genial action, he had hoarded such a store of susceptibility of enjoyment, as carried him through his trials, and enabled him to conserve his powers. Anxious to arrive at the land of Raphael and improvement, he twice set forth from France on foot, very slenderly provided, and was twice retarded, or turned back, by adverse circumstances, ere he could reach the classic soil. On the second occasion he was arrested for debt a little beyond Lyons; and the expenses of his liberation, leaving but a solitary crown in his pocket—What did he do? Invincible to adversity; strong in hope; confident in his own latent energies,—he called together his few intimate friends, and spent his last crown in a jovial supper, during which he apostrophised Fortune with an air of cheerful defiance. This shows the artist and the man; and here is the germ of that hilarious abandonment to trains of ideas of joyful revelry, which

“rules and reigns without control” through this class of his productions.

Our pen has somehow become, perhaps too didactic here for a catalogue; yet, trusting chiefly to the oblivious influence of fine pictures for our apology, we will not suppress the sanction which the tenor of our speculations derives from their congeniality with those of the modern Milton, who sings

“Serene will be our days, and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When Love is an unerring light,
And Joy its own security;
And blest are they, who in the main
This faith, e’en now, do entertain.”

A LAND STORM.

GASPAR POUSSIN.

BEFORE Marino died he had presented his friend Poussin to Cardinal Barberini, a man of taste, who appreciated the merits of the painter, and promised him patronage; but, losing his friend Marino, and the cardinal being dispatched by the pope on a distant legation, Poussin fell into neglect during his absence, and was compelled by his necessities to part with his pictures at very low prices. He also fell sick, but was consoled by the society of Fiamingo, the sculptor, and befriended by his countryman, Jaques Dughet, whose daughter he married, and whose son *Gaspar* he instructed in the elements and mysteries of his art. Bellori says, that Nicholas left Gaspar, as an inheritance, his *name* and his talent in landscape.

That Gaspar assumed the name of Poussin, and

suffered that of Dughet gradually to lapse into oblivion, is certain, and not less so, that his style of landscape-painting is derived from that of his brother-in-law and instructor: we say *derived*—not *copied*, since it is not exactly the same, being of a less abstract, noble, elevated, or idealised, character; and of a more simple and pastoral kind. Gaspar was far less accomplished in painting the human figure than his extraordinary relative: his genius, though poetical, was less epic and towering: he had no such heroic and mysterious aspirations: he would never think of attempting the terrors of the Universal Deluge, or to scale the acclivities of Etna, and represent there the loves of Acis and Galatea, and the jealousy of Polyphemus; or he modestly and reverently avoided, in his superior presence, to emulate the lofty flights of his master.

To this rule, or habitual motive of conduct, there are, however, some few exceptions. Gaspar Poussin *did* now and then indulge his pencil and his imagination in painting a storm, in which ideas of danger, grandeur, and heroism, are of course included or adverted to, and of which we have two instances in the National Gallery. And as the Land Storm which is here under our notice, has a good deal of the same *drenched* look, for which the Deluge of the elder Poussin has been so much celebrated, we may conjecture that it was perhaps painted while his Deluge remained in their studio, and operated at once as a stimulus and an exemplar.

Upon such occasions Gaspar, of course, approached nearer than at other times to the sublimities of his senior; and rarely do we see a work of his without that favourite line in landscape composition—a pic-

turesque and conspicuous winding road. Here, such a road leads off to the left, turning toward a castle on the right-hand side of the central fore-ground. In the generality of his pictures these winding roads have the effect of leading onward the spectator's attention, invitingly, as it were, toward some important object, such as a towered city, or a grand dilapidated palace, or other edifice of former days; but in the present instance, all beyond the road, is murky indistinctness, save where light gleaming from the horizon, beneath heavy rain-clouds, flashes across the dark horrors of a dreadful tempest.

By the force of the raging elements a large tree has been snapped short near the root, and not far from the fore-ground; and its gnarled and groaning limbs and rustling foliage, on which also the light gleams partially, are contorted so that the tree—or the Hamadryad, for there is classic poetry in the landscape—seems in an agony.

The sky is dreadfully dark and portentous. A thicket beyond the road, forming the left hand side-screen, is agitated and torn by the violence of the storm: between its swinging branches and lower extremities, the light part of the sky appears with almost dazzling splendour, while the rain beats hard against the hills, and drenches the lofty patriarchs of the forest.

Beyond the fore-ground objects and winding road, a general turbidness and elementary tumult—such as affects the optic sense when it painfully endeavours to peer through rain and hurricane—pervades the scene, except where light partially tips the distant trees with splendour, and gleams on a moun-

tain ridge and the watch-tower of a romantic castle, which stands, a stately image of stability, where all else seems going to wreck.—Upon the same principle that Handel and other great musical composers have dashed *their* storms with counterpoint and contrasting passages, Gaspar has placed this perpendicular, enduring, and immovable castle where we find it in *his* composition, by way of contrast, where all other objects are bent, agitated, and yielding to the destructive power that sweeps across the landscape. It seems to stand with the calm dignity of a philosopher, contemplating an earthquake, a battle, or some other terrible catastrophe,

“Unhurt amidst the war of elements.”

Meanwhile shepherds alarmed, are driving their flocks and herds toward sheltered places. Under the lee of a rocky and nearly perpendicular bank, and among the lower umbrage of some dark trees, one of these sheltering nooks presents itself, and the cattle are entering; but even the disciplined, humble, and obedient, sheep—meek followers of their leader's example as they are known to be—are so distracted by the unusual violence of this tempest, that one of them, which two shepherds are endeavouring to overtake and reclaim, has madly started away from the flock.

This picture came into Mr. Angerstein's collection from that of the late Lord Lansdowne. It forms an excellent companion to the tranquil scene which we shall place next after it, although not intended as such.

VIEW OF LA RICCIA.
GASPAR POUSSIN.

THIS picture is agreeably varied from that which we have just dismissed, though it is not without Gaspar's favourite feature of a winding road.

ARICIA is of very remote antiquity. It was known as a city sacred to Diana during the Homeric ages, **and celebrated as being** the place to which Orestes, by the connivance of his sister Iphigenia, the priestess, brought that statue of the goddess which he succeeded in purloining from her temple in the Tauric Chersonesus, and which was fabled to have originally fallen from heaven.

Here the great goddess of Ephesus, and of the Tauric Chersonesus, was devoutly worshiped; and this romantic spot, which we may well suppose was in remote ages still more surrounded by sylvan seclusions than it is at present, was also celebrated as the mystic retreat of Numa, where—if he might be believed—he met, and held high converse, with the nymph Egeria.

When Numa appeared before the Roman people, with his new code of laws, he solemnly declared that they were sanctified with the approbation of the nymph Egeria. And among the metamorphoses of Ovid, we read that the nymph was so disconsolate on occasion of the demise of the king, that she melted into tears, and was eventually changed by Diana into a fountain.

Hence the Egerian fountain of the poets; and hence perhaps Gaspar, rendered aware of the classic

legend by his illustrious relative, may have introduced those trickling rills which we dimly perceive in the present picture, among the verdure and rocks beyond the road, and on the left hand.

When Horace performed his favourite journey to Brundisium, he travelled but fourteen—or it may have been sixteen—miles the first day, and passed the night at ARICIA. That is the primitive name of this ancient city—now a small town: but the application of the modern article, and a consequent mistake in the spelling, very common in the beginning of Italian names, has changed its appellation into *La Riccia*. Eustace says it is extremely well built and pretty, particularly about the square, which is adorned with a handsome church on one side, and on the other with a palace, or rather a villa. It stands on the summit of a hill, and is surrounded with groves and gardens.

Of the ancient city, the refuge of Orestes; the studio—probably the library and dormitory—of Numa; and the resting-place of Horace; which was situated at the foot of the hill on which stands the modern *La Riccia*, there remains only some few ruined arches, a circular edifice—once perhaps a temple—and a few scattered substructions. A fragment of wall, which formerly belonged to it, overgrown with bushes, appears at the right hand corner of the fore-ground of Gaspar's view. The site of *La Riccia*, and the scene of the landscape before us, is in fact the remains of an ancient stone quarry, partially overgrown with shrubs, trees, and other verdure; a quarry that furnished the immense foundations of the Appian way, which is formed of vast blocks of stone, and is one of the most striking monuments now remaining of

Roman enterprise and workmanship. The quarry rose from the old town up the acclivity of the hill; and some of the blocks of the Appian way are not less than twenty-four feet in breadth, by nearly sixty in elevation!

Mr. Ottley writes of the present landscape—"The fore-ground represents a winding road, with a group of three figures in conversation; two of them with a dog being seated on the ground, and the other standing." But there is another figure in shadow further advanced along the road; and it should be mentioned, that he who stands near the fore-ground, seems, by the action of his outstretched arms, either relating some alarming adventure, in the interest of which the other parties participate; or perhaps he is intended for a topographer, and is pointing with pertinent local propriety to the relative sites of the ancient and modern La Riccia. These figures are probably touched in by Niccolo.

The pencil of Gaspar Poussin was rich, free, flowing, and so remarkably facile, that the rapidity with which he is reported to have produced his works—sometimes a picture in a day—seems scarcely credible. Italian-shaped towers and turrets, rising on rocky banks, and from among sylvan groves, with here and there a fountain trickling or gushing from the mountain side, (as in the present view,) constitute a scene so much resembling the tenour of his materials of landscape, that the connoisseur of taste is strongly inclined to suppose either that this artist must have designed the modern town; or that La Riccia was his landscape school, or at least was one of his favourite haunts of study, and where he first conceived all that the elder Poussin did not teach him

of the elementary principles of his peculiar style. Tivoli is well known to have been another, to which he made frequent journeys with Claude of Lorraine. The present work is treated in his best manner. It belonged to the late Mr. W. H. Carr, and was purchased by him from the Corsini palace at Rome.

A WOMAN BATHING; OR, PEASANT LAUNDRESS.

REMBRANDT VAN RHYN.

REMBRANDT'S "Woman Bathing," and his "Christ pardoning the Hebrew Adulteress," were placed next to each other in the National Gallery, [No. 100, in Pall Mall,] with the utmost propriety, since they reflect such light on each other, as, while it shows either picture to advantage, shows also the versatility and the wide reach of Rembrandt's power over the instruments of his art, and the vast extent of his ample domain as a colourist and master of chiar-oscuro. The former picture has resulted from the bold and rough energy and rapidity which characterised the artist and the man; the latter unites the utmost richness of colour and grandeur of effect, with the most patient and delicate pencilling, and an exactitude of manual skill, well suited to the miniature dimensions of the figures and other objects that enter into the multifarious composition.

It must be confessed that the woman bathing is homely in her aspect, and even somewhat coarse. Mr. Ottley seems not sorry to get rid of her, by briefly informing his readers that the picture is "marvellously painted, and that he wishes the artist had

had a better subject :” a wish, in which nearly every one will join, excepting perhaps a few lovers of obscure jokes : but critics have public duties to perform ; and where they cannot be very exactly “ descriptive,” or “ explanatory,” it is the more incumbent upon them not to sink all else in silence ; and not to allow it to be inferred that nothing can with propriety be said, because every thing may not be said with propriety.

The worse the subject, the more merit is ascribable to the artist who produces a good picture. In Lord Byron’s friendly controversy with the Reverend Mr. Bowles, he strenuously maintains his favourite position, that it is what any given work of art derives from the mind of the artist, and not its local or proper subject, or the ideas or objects of which it is constituted, which make it admirable, or otherwise. How much his lordship would have rejoiced in this *vrouw*, from the pencil of Rembrandt, as an exemplification of his doctrine.

In country places where there are rivers, the peasant laundresses not unfrequently cleanse foul linen by trampling, precisely in the manner that is here depicted ; and we have little doubt that in some tributary streamlet of the Rhine, on the banks of which the painter is well known to have passed his youth, he has witnessed—perhaps from some cottage window—perhaps from some peep-hole in his father’s mill—a similar exhibition ; and, struck with the picturesque boldness of its *chiar-oscuro*, has hastened with his pencils to record and perpetuate the fact. It may have been—nay, it appears by no means improbable—that the very picture before us has been painted under these hasty circumstances ; and the head and

back-ground finished up afterward in the studio,—in so far as they *are* finished : but, in fact, the whole picture exists as if by the power and creative energy of the artist's pencil, guided by genius. It is a light shining in darkness : it is glory emanating from obscurity : and the vulgarity of the subject is nearly hidden and lost in the sublime fervour with which the work must have been accomplished. Let any other artist labour at this subject for weeks, and he shall not produce half the effect that this great master—or this great magician, rather—of the Art, has conjured up while a sturdy laundress of the Rhine was cleansing a few kerchiefs.

In Goethe's fine poem of Faust—a work performed with kindred ardour to the present—we find the fellow student of his hero lamenting in some such strains as follow. We quote them because it affords a pertinent illustration, applicable to all those pursuits and productions of art which emanate from genius, as contrasted with those of the labour, study, and inclination, which are too often mistaken for genius. It is part of a dialogue between Dr. Faust and his fellow student, or pupil.

WAGNER. Ah ! when a man is condemned to his study, and hardly sees the world of a holiday—scarcely through a telescope—only from afar—how is he to lead it ? How is he to secure its approbation, or obtain its praise ?

FAUST. Oh, if you don't feel it, you will not get it by hunting for. If it does not *gush* from the soul and subdue the hearts of all hearers with *original* delight—sit at it for ever ; glue together ; cook up a hash from another's feast ; and blow your own little heap of ashes into a paltry flame !—You may indeed

gain the admiration of children and apes; if you have a taste for it; but you will never touch the consenting hearts of other men, if it does not flow fresh from your own.

Now what Goethe has thus predicated of successful poetry and science, is precisely what Rembrandt has here accomplished in painting. Look at the handling and touch! You may trace through their rapidity, every movement of his hand and pencil, and how consecutively it has all worked together, to produce a miraculous effect!

As the subject will readily be allowed to be somewhat less agreeably interesting than would be Diana and her nymphs, or the triumph of Amphitrite, the spectator's mind is left more at leisure to dwell on its technical or professional merits, and the spirit by which they are animated; and if lines of beauty and gracefulness do not predominate, the eye may still luxuriate on the admirable manner in which the round of harmony is filled up.

From the collection of the Rev. W. H. Carr.

JESUS CHRIST PARDONING THE HEBREW
ADULTRESS.

REMBRANDT.

FROM Rembrandt's "Woman Bathing," we turn with a feeling nearly allied to amazement at the extraordinary versatility of his powers, to this magnificent display of rich colouring, combined with powerful and solemn chiar-oscuro, and the most patient and delicate pencilling, or manipulation. It is in this latter respect so superior to the average works of Rembrandt, and

so unusual withal, that its execution has sometimes been erroneously, and by the minor critics, attributed to Gerard Douw (who was Rembrandt's pupil) and sometimes to Eckhoudt. It was never doubted that Rembrandt must have been the architect of the work, or suspected that either of these could have been more than the builder; and even this task has been latterly, and we believe justly, conceded to the master-genius of the Rhine, who, doubtless, must have possessed the power of producing it—if he could command the necessary patience.

That he was occasionally thus patient and thus minute, we see by the diligent productions of his etching-needle; and since, as has been recorded, it was painted during the earlier portion of Rembrandt's career, for his friend and patron the burgomaster Six; the fact of its being the production of his hand, as well as mind, needs no longer be questioned. Youth is the season of the patient manual operation of a painter, and minute diligence alone gratified the indigenous taste of Holland and the Low Countries.

Throughout his scriptural productions, it is obvious that Rembrandt has not been critically versed in the sacred costume of the Hebrews. We are here introduced to the interior of the second temple of Jerusalem; yet he produces no ark, cherubim, table of shew-bread, mercy-seat, or golden candelabrum with its planetary burners. He would not have cared to consult Montfaucon or Calmet, had their works been then in existence: or to refer to the arch of Titus for authority, had it stood in the next village. A few trophies of ancient armour, and a few oriental dresses, were the antiques of which he boasted, and with which he adorned his studio, and assisted his pro-

fessional practice,—not because they were ancient, but because they were splendid and picturesque.

But in the present work he has, notwithstanding, caught the spirit of poetry which should govern a pictorial display of the adytum of a religious edifice; and though we are not here presented with all the sacred utensils of the second temple, here are evidently what are intended for the occult columns of Jachin and Boaz, [perhaps our artist may have been a freemason,] and behind them such a lofty pile of ornamental and mysterious display, built up with architectonic skill, and rich and strange materials, as to give rise, so long as we permit our minds to dwell thereon, to various and romantic trains of ideas. Here, gems, gigantic shell-work, orbicular phenomena, jewels, and the precious metals, are formed into a grandly fantastic assemblage of homogeneous novelty. Is it the toilette of Amphitrite, or the side-board of Neptune, or the appurtenance of an enchanted castle of Spenser or Ariosto, that we here behold? Are we transported beyond

“The utmost Indian isle of Taprobane?”

Or where else among those far off oriental lands where bounteous Nature

“Show’rs on her kings barbaric—pearl and gold?”

We cannot tell. No catechetical power of objecting-criticism is left us. We can only acquiesce and admire.

But nothing of all this is *ostentatiously* displayed. Quite the reverse. The exhibition is all solemn sanctity, mystical splendour, and perfect unobtrusiveness. Aloft is a curious display of quaint origi-

nality ; and half way up is an immense convex, or concave, mirror, with an oracular aspect, such as that which confronted the wise Cornelius of the minstrel's song. To stand before and look into it would be awful ! But from the height and distance at which it is beheld, it might pass for the shield of King David, or a talisman of Solomon, or for a simulacrum of the orb of the moon itself—the mystic sign of the Hebrew festivals.—By the potency of his art, Rembrandt has raised aloft this magic mirror, or oracular phenomenon. Were it lower, who would dare think of looking into it without being possessed by the agitations of hope and fear, and without expecting the miraculous revelation of his future destiny ?

But all this wondrous display, so imposing in itself, and which here stands in the stead of an altar, is as nothing—all is kept in such hushed subservience to the group below, where the Saviour is admonishing hypocrisy, and showing forth mercy to the penitent : it is as if the splendours of art grew dim before “ the Sun of righteousness.”

It remains not for us to inform the reader—but we may remind him—that Rembrandt, far beyond all other painters, knew how, when, and where, to cast “ a dim religious light ;” or, as Milton has elsewhere expressed, could

“ Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.”

The gloom, and the restricted light, which, combined with nocturnal indistinctness, is managed with such surprising address in his Adoration of the Shepherds, is philosophically modified, so as to be suited to the careful delineation and precision of

minute forms which prevail throughout the more important details of his Woman detected in Adultery, the *effect* of which is not less miraculous than its other revealments. All is judiciously held in due subservience to that principal group which constitutes the proper subject of the picture. Some religious ceremonial appertaining to the Old Law (of Moses) is proceeding toward the altar, but it is with consummate wisdom, on the part of the painter, eclipsed by the Christian manifestation. Such is the intense interest we take in the groups below, we hardly care to know that above is a Hebrew priest officiating with dignity to a number of kneeling devotees, and that near him stands a Levite with a censer, and other officers of the temple. In themselves they are ciphers; but we perceive on reflection that they confer tenfold value on what stands before them.

The principal group, which (at least) in its spread of light, takes the general form of a broad-based pyramid, is so constituted, that Jesus Christ, elevated above the rest of the figures on some stone steps, forms the apex, and receives a certain portion of the principal light; the chief breadth of light falling on the detected and contrite sinner, who is dressed in white, variegated and relieved by certain ornaments denoting that she belongs to the middle grade of Hebrew society.

The figure of Jesus Christ rises higher in the composition than the rest of the fore-ground group, and has been pronounced "too tall;" but as this extraordinary height confers a species of *superiority* which places the Saviour above those figures that are merely human, it is far from being objectionable. Casting

our eye from this figure to the Jesus Christ of Sebastian del Piombo, we cannot but wish the latter had more of the altitude of Rembrandt's. His hair falls luxuriantly about his shoulders; and he is attired in a robe of unobtrusive reddish purple;—perhaps we should have written *antique* purple, it being the colour of fading ruddy vine leaves, which the classical writers assure us was *the* regal purple of the Greeks and Romans. The mild benevolence of the Saviour's action is quite exemplary, and his air and look sedately compassionate and dignified. ~~Behind him are some~~ few of his disciples, *attentive* (as certainly they ought to be ~~represented~~) to the lesson of mercy which their ~~master~~ is teaching. The nearest and most conspicuous, who leans on a staff, and looks as if his mental faculties were engaged in considering the case of the fair penitent, has been supposed to be St. Peter, but may perhaps have been intended for St. John—the only evangelist who records this pathetic anecdote, and who does so with the particularity of an eye-witness, though without mentioning that Peter was present. Perhaps, however, Rembrandt may not have been very critical on this point. But there is a figure more immediately behind Jesus Christ with a pale and wicked countenance, partially overshadowed, and not ill suited to one “who hath a devil,” which we run small hazard in pronouncing to be Judas Iscariot. He has a spy-like aspect, and seems watching, and hoping to catch, the Divine Teacher in some technical infringement of the Roman, or the Mosaic, law. The rest of this group are generalised and inconspicuous.

The hypocritical accuser of the adultrous, whom it is not difficult to perceive is a much greater sinner

than herself, habited in a robe of black, is drawing aside her veil with unfeeling rudeness; not to say malevolent exultation, but with emblematic as well as literal meaning, which cannot be misunderstood. His heart is seared; and the exposure of female frailty is to him enjoyment. Behind him and immediately beyond the penitent, is a magisterial figure—perhaps meant for a benevolent Jew Rabbi, in a rich oriental dress, with a silver frontlet, or phylactery, to his turban, and from whose head-dress a rich shawl falls over his shoulders. There is humanity and pity about the countenance of this Hebrew gentleman. He stands admirably contrasted to the accuser, and we are quite certain will not throw the first stone: he even places his hand with considerate kindness on the shoulder of the former, as if to moderate his asperity, or to entreat him calmly to await the sentence of the Saviour. From having formerly inspected Rembrandt's etchings, we have some faint reminiscence of the Burgomaster Six, and suspect this to be his portrait, in a rabbinical disguise.

A Roman soldier, helmeted, and clad in steel, who appears to be one of the witnesses, or who has assisted the pharisaical hypocrite in taking the offender into custody, and has entered the temple with the accusing group, holds up her train—perhaps in mockery; and while he agreeably diversifies the picturesque display of costume, is aptly characterised by the obduracy of mechanical courage and strict discipline which appear in his countenance. One might venture a wager that he was one of Herod's satellites, when the Innocents were slaughtered.

Somewhat nearer—indeed the nearest figure in the whole composition—stands another benevolent

personage, of whose face we see little, but his action is mild, and his demeanour reverential toward Jesus Christ. (Is it Joseph of Arimathea? or some other incipient Christian? There is room to suppose either). He is arrayed in rich crimson drapery; wears a sword; and a feathered and jewelled turban; and groups advantageously with a bearded and placid-looking aged man, whose face, seen in profile, is only subservient to the principal light in the picture, and whose broad and flat-crowned headdress, is in picturesque apposition to the surrounding objects.

Beyond him, and beneath the high altar, is a subordinate painted episode: an original thought on the part of the painter; which, though placed in obscurity, should not be overlooked. It is a cripple on crutches; and who, perhaps, is blind as well as lame. He seems disposed to advance toward the Saviour, eager with the hope of miraculous remedy, but a woman, in her prudence, restrains him—either because she respectfully fears to be intrusive; or, because she desires first to hear the pardon of the frail one.

The *character* of the adulteress is not elevated. Nobody expects elevation of character from Rembrandt. He triumphs in spite of his want of it. But elevation here is not called for (it rather is proscribed): and therefore here, is not, as is usual in the pictures of Rembrandt, a defect effective. But, neither is the character mean, or destitute of beauty (as we frequently see in the works of this painter); and, in *expression*, the woman is so truly penitent, that it imparts a pathos to the whole performance which is intensely touching. She hopes, but hardly dares to hope. The more benevolent of the bystanders

are all under the evident influence of sympathetic feeling, of which the spectator cannot but participate. Christ has already made the inquiry, "Hath any man condemned thee?" She seems to be answering, with affecting contrition, "No man, Lord!"—This is the point of time selected by the artist. The reply is suspended; but anticipated. We know what it was, and are satisfied. The "Mind hath her content," quite—"absolute."

The rest of the by-standers are, for the most part, opulent Hebrews (Rabbinical Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, into which the Jewish public was at that time separable), and to whom the rich dresses of this artist's cabinet are not ill suited: in truth, some of the wealthy Hebrew merchants of the cities which ennoble the banks of the Rhine and of the Scheldt, are known to have worn such in the days of Rembrandt. On the white dress of the humble and contrite transgressor, and on the subservient pavement, the light falls broadly and effectively, forming together a mass of sufficient splendour to attract and fix and gratify attention, while by its opposition it deepens the solemnity of the overshadowed parts of the composition. "It is a light shining in darkness," and is dextrously led off from the broad central mass, and distributed in smaller portions, chiefly on the heads of the principal figures, while it glances on the steel corslet of the Roman soldier, and other glittering, but minor, accessories. The reader should not omit to notice that the hands of all the figures are painted with a remarkable degree of care.

All beyond Jesus Christ, Jachin and Boaz, and the distant Hebrew devotees, are "long drawn aisles," and deep recesses of profound gloom.—Not

black, but intensely obscure; from which dun obscurity, the ruby reds, the solemn purple browns, and the white, of the nearer group, come forth with the mild lustre of well arranged precious stones; with here and there a diamond spark; but exhibited unostentatiously, and not in the garish sun-light. For just keeping; unobtrusive richness; and careful finish, where all appearance of care is involved in its own mysteries—the work is quite transcendental!

There is about this design, so much of the general character of our Saviour's system of ethics—so much (if the expression may be permitted) of the *tone* of Christianity—that it seems more like a painted epitome of the New Testament, than any other picture that at present occurs to us. It is radiant with mercy and redemption: it seems tacitly to say, “Do as you would be done unto.” “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;” and as thou forgivest, thy trespasses shall be forgiven.

This picture is probably unique with regard to the degree of elaborate finish bestowed on it by the artist. It was (as we have before intimated) painted for Rembrandt's friend and patron, the Burgomaster Six, and has since remained with his descendants till the advances of the victorious French armies toward Holland, and the known avidity with which their officers sought after the finest works of Art, induced the Six family to consign this easily portable production, for sale to England. It was accordingly put up to auction by the elder Christie, at his rooms in Pall Mall; but the biddings not rising higher than four thousand five hundred guineas, it was *bought in* at that sum, and afterward disposed of for the same to Mr. Angerstein, by private contract.

SAINT JOHN THE BAPTIST, PREACHING.

FRANCISCO MOLA.

WITH too little reflection (at least in our opinion), it has been asserted of Francisco Mola, that "he weakened the interest of his pictures, by the introduction of figures upon so considerable a scale as to excite a doubt which is principal, the actors or the scene. **Such doubts are not legitimate.** We regard the expression of them (if they do anywhere exist) as no better than the vile conventional attempts of unphilosophical critics, who, perhaps without knowing it—would repress originality, or ignorantly compel it to conform to such critical circumscriptions as would abate its vigour. But, in fact, such doubts do not obtain with the public; and for "weakened," in the above passage, we should probably read *strengthened* "the interest of his pictures."

Of the numerous visitors of the last Royal Academy Exhibition who looked at the picture of Sir Walter Scott in the Rhymer's Glen, I must be permitted to doubt whether any thought the worse of the glen on account of the poet's presence there; or the worse of the portrait on account of this locality. Why then should we listen to critics who would disparage Francisco Mola on this account?—When a painter is versed only in one branch of his art, the expedient of palliating his incompetency of talent in the other, by a sacrifice of the figures to the landscape, or the landscape to the figures, may shelter *him*: but this should be no precedent, or example; nor engender

reproach for Francisco, who could paint both well; and who was, unhappily for the lovers of Art, cut short in his illustrious career by an endemic fever; probably before he had fully developed his powers, or vindicated his claims as the inventor of a more perfect union between landscape and figures, than had yet appeared since the revival of Art in Europe.

The preacher of repentance is here seated on a rocky bank or knoll, overshadowed by a clump of trees of mature growth, of good forms, and which constitute a broad mass of obscurity, contributing greatly to the effect of the whole: his auditors are not numerous,—consisting of not more than four or five persons, but these are so introduced that more are suggested, and may easily be imagined, on the left hand, beyond the boundary of the picture—for the frame (as we scarcely need say) is always to be regarded as an aperture through which a certain portion of nature is supposed to be seen.

The nearest figure is a well-dressed woman, attentive to the word, beyond whom is a turbaned Pharisee, apparently of some rank in society. The others, it may be, are intended for Levites: but all seem listening earnestly to the novel, but divine, doctrines. We say Levites, because, in the Gospel of St. John the Evangelist, we read that the Jews sent certain Pharisees and Levites into the desert, to hear the avowals of the Baptist, and to inquire of him who he was?

The wild figure of St. John is central, principal, animated by the zeal that is an appropriate concomitant of his divine mission, and finely contrasted, in costume, to the social habiliments of those with whom

he is grouped. He is older here than he is represented elsewhere in the Gallery, and quite as old as he could have been at the time of his decapitation. Conformably to the scriptural accounts, he is clad in camel-skin bound with a leathern girdle, yet with a dark red drapery cast over his right knee: his chest, arms, and the upper part of his body, being naked; and his hair uncombed, shaggy, and redundant. And, while his right hand is emphatically placed on his heart, as if in attestation of his own sincerity, and the truth of his disclosures and doctrines, he points with his left to the Saviour, whom we behold approaching at the distance of some sixty yards or so.

The painter appears to have supposed, with great probability, that the Pharisees and Levites, who (as mentioned above) were sent to listen—after reporting the result of their mission at Jerusalem, returned again to the wilderness on the following day; for the Evangelist says, “These things were done in Bethabara, beyond Jordan,” where John was baptising. The *next day*, John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! THIS is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he *was* before me.”

Hence the peculiar pertinence and propriety of the action of St. John's left hand and arm; which, as well as the rest of the nudities of this energetic figure, are delineated with consummate academic power, and painted with masterly skill. The symbolical cross and banner of the Baptist, are beside him, forming an advantageous line in the arrange-

ment of the composition, which is extremely picturesque; while a solemn appropriate tone, pervades the whole performance.

It has been said that Gray caught the sublime idea of his impassioned Bard, who,

“(Loose his beard and hoary hair,
Stream'd like a meteor to the troubled air)
—with a master's hand and prophet's fire,
Struck the deep sorrows of his lyre,”

from some work of Art which he saw whilst in Italy. I forget what; but probably the Moses of Parmegiano, or the Deity of Ezekiel's vision. I do not mean to vouch for the fact; though it is not at all unlikely. I have quite as much faith in the old and homely adage that “Great wits jump;” and think that the simultaneous production—or so nearly simultaneous that neither artist could have borrowed from the other—of the Baptists of Francisco Mola and Drummond of Hawthornden; and their similarity, as far as ideas *represented*, and ideas *suggested*, can be brought into close comparison—is a pregnant instance of this sympathetic affection, or excitement, worthy of at least the reader's passing attention.

The production of Drummond to which I here allude—the very best of his Songs of Sion—is the more archaic, and perhaps the wildest of the two; and will therefore probably be thought the most homogeneous with the scriptural representation of the subject—if there be no invidiousness in saying so; but it still seems so like a clear reflection of Mola's, that we think our readers will not regret to share with us in the pleasure of comparing them; the rather, as the poem is less well known than it

ought to be ; for it is in fact one of the finest things of the kind in the English language :—

“ The last, and greatest, herald of Heav’n’s King,
Girt with rough skins, hies to the desert wild :
Among the savage brood the woods forth bring ;
Which he more harmless found than man,—and mild.
His food was locusts, and what there doth spring,
With honey that from virgin hives distill’d ;
Parch’d body, hollow eyes—some uncouth thing
Made him appear : long since from earth exil’d.
There burst he forth—“ All ye whose hopes rely
On God ! with me amidst these deserts mourn :
Repent ! repent ! and from old errors turn.”
Who listen’d to his voice, obey’d his cry :
Only the echoes, which he made relent,
Rung from their flinty caves—Repent !—repent !”

Nothing of the kind can be finer than this closing of the sonnet with the fading echo of its burthen ; but it is the circumstance of the poem and picture reflecting each other’s features, to which we wished more particularly to attract the reader’s notice, perceiving that they were marked by the same wild and desolate air ; the same solemn gloom ; the same primitive simplicity and rugged harmony ; and—we had nearly added, the same inspiration.—And why not ?—

Another word—Drummond and Mola were, as we have stated, contemporaries : but the former had put forth his “ Flowers of Sion”—from which we have culled the rose—before he travelled to Italy : yet he might have seen in England, Mark Antonio’s, or some other, engraving, after the Saint John of *Raphael* ; and Raphael having opened the mouth of *his* preacher of repentance, the resemblance between his design and that of the Poet of Hawthornden, is not less striking than Francisco Mola’s.—But perhaps

we had best put an end to this annotation by bringing to the recollection of the reader that both poet and painters had before them the same evangelical archetype.

This picture came to the National Gallery with the munificent bequest of the Rev. W. Holwell Carr, who obtained it from the collection of Mons. Robet, of Paris.

STUDY OF TREES FROM NATURE.

CLAUDE GELLÉE OF LORRAINE.

IN this descriptive Catalogue of the *Pictures* contained in our National Collection, the domestic biography of *their authors* has been regarded as superfluous. Most persons—nearly all who have libraries, possess either Bryan's, or Pilkington's, *Lives of the Painters*; or a *Cyclopædia*; or a *Biographical Dictionary*: and those who have not the luxury of regular rows of well furnished book-shelves, have for the most part been supplied with *Lives* of the most distinguished Artists in the cheap compilations of the day. Wherefore we request, that whenever we may have produced a biographical anecdote—which we never intended to do but when it should tend to the correction of some error, or to promote the knowledge of the historical and technical progress of *the Art*—it may be regarded, as Boydell's anonymous biographer reports of the figures of Claude of Lorraine—as something which we throw into the bargain, to those who may do us the honour of purchasing our Catalogue.

But the National Gallery is richer in the works of Claude, than in those of any other eminent master;

possessing no fewer than ten ; painted, too, at different periods of his protracted life : he is therefore—and because of his importance in the Pantheon of Art—entitled to more than ordinary attention.

Of Claude's out-of-door studies, so frequently mentioned by his biographers, if any have reached England and are now extant, the present is one. We do not take upon us to tell, or to know, the spot whence it was painted ; but we think there is pretty good evidence, both internal and external, that it was painted from Nature.

For the internal evidence, the picture itself must of course be inspected, and by a professional eye, or an eye habituated to professional and practical notices. We shall arrive at it anon : but it seems previously necessary to notice a few errors concerning the earlier events of the life of this justly celebrated artist, which have been ignorantly and recklessly propagated on the fancied, but misreported, authority of the elder Sandrart.

Mr. Boydell, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Valpy—the whole tribe of those who make new books as apothecaries make new medicines, merely by pouring out of one bottle into another, have reported, *as they say*, on the authority of Sandrart, what Sandrart does by no means authorise : and hence every penny magazine in England is at this time tinkling with the information, that Claude of Lorraine, before he was a great landscape-painter, was an “ architect of pies,” or—abating this glittering literary prattle,—was a pastry-cook's apprentice ; and every ambitious pastry-cook's apprentice is staring with emulation at the penny wonder.

According to the Abati Lanzi, though Sandrart

lived at an interesting era of Art, and from his personal knowledge of distinguished professors, had good opportunities of acquiring correct information; his credulity renders him unworthy of implicit* reliance; but it so happens that this diligent and ingenious traveller, does *not say* of the early years of Claude, what the literary apothecaries have asserted. His words are—

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umphs of the gastronomic art, suggested to an energetic and unsophisticated mind of keen natural sensibility toward the charms of inanimate nature ; and to an eye which had observed certain phenomena in real landscape scenery, which it had not seen duly represented in the pictures of Paul Brill (who was his master's tutor and probably his own first exemplar), that if their possessor could have rocks, trees, and rivers placed before him, as he had the good things of the dinner-table, something better might be produced than he had yet beheld in the art of landscape-painting. To this short chain of reasoning, Claude, like Mahomet, added the very simple inference, that, as the mountains would not come to him to be copied, he could go to the mountains.

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taken. We have, moreover, a connected concatenation of traditional proof, of which Claude himself is the first link, and ourselves the last.

Claude, Horizonti, and More (the last, like the two former, a very clever and intelligent landscape-painter; but born in England, and who passed nearly his whole life in Italy), all lived to be very old men; and when Sir George Beaumont was first in Italy—some forty years ago—More told him that Horizonti, when old, had informed him, that he had seen Claude and Gaspar Poussin arrive together, at Tivoli, with their painting apparatus; and that they rode thither on asses. Sir George told this to Eastlake the academician, as well as to Constable and others—among those others, the late Mr. Hearne and myself. So that what *Beckford* appears to have written (though of this we are not certain), and Hazlitt in his intensity to call a delicious painter's dream, is not altogether so very visionary.

But there is so much poetry in this painter's dream, that the reader, as we trow, will have nothing to regret if we should here rehearse it. The dreams, both of poets and painters, are of a sacred character. Who would rudely disturb a poet from his dream? or who would willingly mutilate or fracture it? No: we must give the whole dream, prelude and all.

“The name of CLAUDE has alone something in it that softens and harmonises the mind. It touches a magic chord. Oh! matchless scenes: oh! orient skies, bright with purple and gold: Ye opening glades and distant sunny vales, glittering with fleecy flocks, pour all your enchantment into my soul; let it reflect your chastened image, and forget all meaner

things ! Perhaps the most affecting tribute to the memory of this great artist, is the character drawn of him by an eminent master, in his *Dream of a Painter*.

“ On a sudden I was surrounded by a thick cloud, or mist, and my guide wafted me through the air till we alighted on a most delicious rural spot. I perceived it was the early hour of the morn, when the sun had not risen above the horizon. We were alone, except that at a little distance, a young shepherd played on his flageolet as he walked before his herd, conducting them from the fold to the pasture. The elevated pastoral air he played, charmed me by its simplicity, and seemed to animate his obedient flock. The atmosphere was clear and perfectly calm, and now the rising sun gradually illumined the fine landscape, and began to discover to our view the distant country of immense extent. I stood awhile in expectation of what might next present itself of dazzling splendour, when the only object which appeared, to fill this natural, grand, and simple scene, was a rustic who entered, not far from the place where we stood, who by his habiliments seemed nothing better than a peasant. He led a poor little ass, which was loaded with all the implements required by a painter in his work. After advancing a few paces, he stood still, and with an air of rapture seemed to contemplate the rising sun. He next fell on his knees, directed his eyes towards heaven, crossed himself, and then went on with eager looks, as if to make choice of the most advantageous spot from which to make his studies as a painter.—‘ This (said my conductor) is that Claude Gellée of Lorraine, who, nobly disdaining the low employment to which he was originally bred, left it, in order to adorn the world with works of most accomplished excellence.’ ”

This is much in the spirit of Claude's painting; and hence the, not very recondite, origin of that habit of out-of-door study, which this artist appears to have been *the first* to adopt as the radical principle of perfection in landscape-painting. This *originating* power, is of itself great praise, and the suffrages of two centuries of Art, have awarded it to Claude of Lorraine, who was the senior, and in part the tutor, of Gaspar Poussin, and entirely the tutor of the elegant and pensive Swanevelt, surnamed "The Hermit of Italy." Claude's experience must soon have ~~gratified~~ his taste, and confirmed his ~~theoretic~~ reasoning.

Hence, too, ~~after~~ Claude had indulged in this ~~practice awhile~~, the ability which Sandrart discovered ~~in~~ him to reason philosophically, notwithstanding the scantiness of his earlier education, concerning the various appearances of the same scene as the hours or seasons changed, and as clouds or sun-light swept over the landscape, which he would watch with intense interest from early dawn to dewy eve, noting the successive causes of the mutations it underwent. And hence the amazing power which he acquired of expressing space, and of combining this expression with forms and colours of amenity and grandeur, through all their degrees and varieties of combination, and transition, including every contingent circumstance. All was sedulously explored up to the fountain-head; all was derived from Nature, and by the most direct and simple process.

Yet after all this direct evidence, and all else that has been said, and written, and repeated, concerning these exemplary out-of-door habits of studying landscape, Claude appears to have been less of an out-of-door practical painter of Nature in her *details*, than of an out-of-door *student*, or mental and visual ob-

server ; and his intensity of observation, and powers of memory—his ability to

“ Catch, ere she change, the Cynthia of the minute ;”

—his talent to fix the colours, forms, and general tones, of the scene before him, on the retina of his recollective faculty—to have done him more actual service in his pilgrimages to Tivoli and along the banks of the Tyber, than his fingers and his pencils. It may possibly be of some importance for the reader to notice this distinction, both to the fame of the artist, and to unborn ages of Art.

We see, in the works of Claude, the aerial perspective of his landscapes most exquisitely attended to, under all its elementary varieties. In his ample distances, the spectator's mind is gratified with easily tracing scores of miles in every direction—so delicate are his gradations—so extraordinary is his power of expressing space. We see the ever-varying forms and the colours, of groves ; of clouds ; and of water, calm, or more or less agitated, and through **every** variety of agitation ; and the several parts **always** in perfect concord : [“ Every object (**as says Lanzi**) arrests the attention of an amateur ; **every** thing furnishes instruction to a professor]. But we see little of the individual portraiture of the objects severally, of which these grand and beautiful landscapes consist, as we do in the scenes subsequently painted by Wynants, Ruysdael—the intense and profound Ruysdael—Wouwermans, and Hobbima ; and rarely, if ever, **has** Claude painted a landscape that is throughout a view from Nature, such as we now not unfrequently see in the admired works of Wilson, Turner, Calcott, Constable, and the other more recent out-of-door landscape students.

We behold, indeed, the temple of Jupiter Stator at Rome, and the Tiburtine Sibyl at Tivoli; the triumphal arches of Constantine and of Septimius Severus; the Coliseum, and other well known ruins of Italian edifices; but they are always introduced abstractedly from their local situations, as eligible parts, or features, of landscape *compositions*: while the *trees* of this great artist—the most frequent of landscape features—are so far from being portraits done out-of-doors and from Nature, of individual trees, that you are rarely able to tell what species of tree is before you. An Italian stone-pine, a palm (in his Oriental subjects), and a mountain-ash, you may now and then recognise: but when do you see an oak, as in the pictures of Ruysdael and Hobbima? When do you see a decided chestnut, as in those of Salvator Rosa? When do you see an elm, a beech, a sycamore, an ash, an abele, a plane, or any other of those common European forest trees which are of the growth of Italy? The fervid and vivacious and liberal Lady Morgan, has called the trees of Claude a vegetable aristocracy. They are so. But an aristocracy of his own creation. Of none can you trace the ancestry.—But a king claims the right of such creation, and it may be said that Claude was

“—monarch of all he survey’d*.”

He discovered, from frequent and accurate observation, what constituted the beauty, and what the

* I am reminded here, that I have already lavished this scrap of Cowper’s poetry upon a rascally Athanasian dragon, in treating of Dominichino’s St. George, which occasions me some little regret. The dragon shall certainly go without them, should I happily live to see a second edition; for Claude certainly has a far preferable title.

intrinsic grandeur of such objects, and he *generalised* his trees, and ennobled the patriarchs of the forest accordingly; so that they afford as pertinent woodland examples as could well be adduced, of Dr. Johnson's aphorism, that "nothing can please many and please long, but just representations of general Nature."

If among all the landscapes, or studies of landscape, from the pencil of Claude, now extant in England, there be a view done immediately from Nature, it is Sir George Beaumont's, which has been very properly entitled by Mr. Ottley a "Study of Trees from Nature." Yet, even this is *in part* composition: the middle opening between the loftier and the less lofty trees, where part of a river, a cascattella, a ruined tower or temple, and a far-off blue mountain appear, are *introduced*: and there is a *pentimento* of a goat, which shows that though the picture may have been begun abroad, it was altered and finished *at home*. There are other evidences of this fact, of which I shall presently treat.

But even in painting *these* trees, and with Nature immediately before the artist's eyes, he has, whilst at work, applied his generalising and softening principle of suavity, by divesting them of all that was not beautiful or grand, or to his own taste, in their forms, colours, and specific characters; and with these divestments, their individuality and portraiture is so far gone, that it is difficult, if it be practicable, decidedly to say they were intended for any particular species of trees. The chief of them, both in the forms of their masses of foliage and in their branching, appear to me—the loftier, more like elms, and the less lofty, more like mulberry-trees,—than like trees of any

other kind ; and yet they are far from being exactly like elms and mulberry-trees.

The reason of this fancied, or real, but not very near resemblance, may be, because mulberries, and elms, are of a middle character—less sturdy, vigorous, and lateral, in their mode of growth, than oaks, and less elegant, feminine, and aspiring, than ash-trees ;—and the mind, in the process of generalising, or idealising, naturally arrives at this middle character, or “ central form,” as Sir Joshua Reynolds expresses it. Claude has retained no more of specific character in his trees, than he thought or felt was necessary to the varieties of that blandishment, which, if it did not circumscribe his style of landscape, held a sceptre over it.

On the whole, it would seem as if Nature, in consideration of the sincerity of Claude’s attachment, his extreme solicitude, and his long continued attentions, had resigned, or permitted to him, the rare privileges of uplifting her veil, and remoulding, or remodelling, her vegetable ornaments—of dallying with her ringlets, or disposing her tresses to his own taste,—provided he did not take too great liberties ; or, perhaps, knowing that he would not—having more confidence in him, in this respect, than she had in Salvator Rosa or Pietro Tempesta. To him the mighty mother did *not*

“ —unveil her *awful* face ;”

but condescended to put on airs of benignity, and arrayed herself in smiles : and his style found, and still finds, admiring credence, wherever there is taste, not because he was a more accurate *copyist* of Nature, than all other landscape-painters, but because

the amenities of the manners of his pencil, being more *persuasive*, his admirers are charmed into that belief.

Return we now to those internal evidences of Sir George's Claude being painted immediately from Nature, which we, a page or two back, engaged to set before the reader.

First. This most illiterate of painters, is the only one who has kept a record to verify his genuine works: and there is no record of *this* picture in his *Liber Veritatis*, which seems to argue, and almost to prove, that the artist had not parted with it (during his life-time), but had kept it by him as a study, or work of reference.

Next. The Abaté Lanzi says, that "Claude painted for his studio *a landscape* enriched with views from the Villa Madama, in which a wonderful variety of trees was introduced, which he preserved for the purpose of supplying himself, as from nature, with subjects for his various pictures." Instead of "a landscape enriched with views," which is not very good sense, we should here read (as I venture to think), a treasury of landscapes, of which Lanzi's addition, that Claude refused to sell *it* to the munificent pontiff Clement IX., although that prince offered to cover it with pieces of gold, applied to some *one* that was locally desirable to the pope on account of its subject, or the superior art displayed in its treatment; most likely the former. Had there been such a congregation of views as Lanzi understood, or implies, on any single canvas, where is it now? We may safely believe that no picture whatever would be better known, or more admired—if it had existence.

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had brought home the Study which he had made out of doors, there had been an opening between the trees in the middle part of the landscape—he having rejected, or omitted, what he found there in nature, on account, perhaps, of its deforming the composition, or of its interfering with something he wanted more; and as if he had afterward filled up that opening with a portion of a river, a cascatella, a ruined tower, or the little temple of Tivoli partially seen, and a lofty blue mountain beyond; which lofty mountain does not thoroughly accord, and, were the trees removed, would not harmoniously blend, with the bit of distance to the right-hand of the trees. The whole of this middle opening has a *done-at-home* appearance, as if it were taken from another sketch made at another place and time. And it is quite obvious, from the tenor of his works, that Claude often *compiled* his landscapes, by bringing together select bits from Tivoli, from the banks of the Tyber, and from other places, and assimilating them into the happiest accordance by his occult and peculiar power.

Now, in the second edition, the above-mentioned trees are brought more together; and the opening is closed up, so as only to permit light sky, leading on to the piping and ivy-crowned pastoral figure, to appear between them, and its sunny emanations to catch on the stems of the trees.

4th. There is, moreover, a *pentimento*, or perceptible after-correction, from the pencil of Claude, in the Beaumont Study. A white goat, of which the traces are obvious on near inspection, has lain originally under the middle opening (mentioned above) which the artist found interfered with the light on the cascatella, after he had introduced it; and he therefore covered up the goat with verdure.

These evidences taken together, and combined with the record of Rospigliosi's picture in the *Liber Veritatis*, appear to demonstrate, nearly, that our National Gallery is enriched with an out-of-door study from the pencil of Claude, painted immediately from Nature, which, if I mistake not, is unique in England.

LANDSCAPE, WITH NARCISSUS AND ECHO.

CLAUDE OF LORRAINE.

THE very charming scene which this delightful landscape-painter has embellished with a sleeping Naiad; the beautiful self-enamoured youth Narcissus; and the babbling nymph Echo—with perhaps her daughter Re-echo behind her—is perfectly Claudesque in the sequestered air of its nearer grounds; the delicate degradations of its distance and sky; and the harmonious glow of its *chiar-oscuro*. In its composition the elements of grandeur and beauty are blended with peculiar felicity, much more so than in some other of his works; and those dulcet and melodious aerial tones for the exemplary production of which this artist is so justly famous, are placidly smiling through the whole performance.

The ruined and very picturesque castle, bathed in a warm gray tint, and sparkling with glittering perforations, which stands forth nobly on a rocky knoll near the centre of the picture, gives poetic dignity, while it adds great pictorial value, to the performance. Beyond it is one of those lovely lunette bays of the Mediterranean, which abound on the western coast of Italy, between Naples and Tuscany. A shepherd is wending homeward with his flock, through

the vale beneath the castle knoll; and the view is terminated by lofty and very distant mountains, seen beyond the horizontal line of the sea.

The time represented in Claude's picture is rather late in the afternoon, the sun having declined far westward, yet with so little apparent abatement of his meridional splendour, that the glow of a tropical climate still seems to pervade the landscape—an effect, however, which is partly the result of those broad umbrageous shadows of the near ground, by which the bright sky is contrasted.

The sylvan grandeur of the fore-ground, where the trees shoot up loftily; where an Italian stone pine with a crooked stem, impends over a tank, well-spring, or pool of still water, beyond which is a mountain ash, of light and tender foliage, which the slant rays of the sun has warmed into glowing harmony—are all much to be admired, as well as the aquatic plants and flowers which are growing around the water, for the taste with which they are pencilled; their characteristic branching; and the just tones and varieties of their verdure.

In this, as in all the landscapes of Claude—generally speaking—the finishing is accurately harmonious with regard to light, shade, and colour; and in such perfect unison with itself, that it charms us by whatsoever light we inspect it. Look at it by a strong light and at noon-day, and you shall see a considerable number of Nature's minor details of foliage, flowers, and wild forms in the branching and broken ground, which gradually become partially, and at length wholly, invisible, as the daylight fades; just as in the works of Nature herself, the multitude of objects by which the eye is caught, and

attention in some measure distracted or dissipated in the glare of noon,

“ — when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams” —

are gradually melted into breadth and repose as evening advances.

That Claude could—as Joachim Sandrart has reported, from oral communion with him—reason philosophically concerning the causes of the varying effects of landscape-nature, as the hours succeed each other, and as the seasons revolve, is corroborated by his having produced works, such as could not have been produced, had not such reasonings, attended by concomitant and homogeneous feelings, found place in his mind. Should the spectator of taste—smit with the love of sacred Art—stand entranced before such of his pictures as, like the present, are pervaded by the post-meridian glow of a genial climate;—should he thus linger till the live-long daylight fail, there would—or we deceive ourselves—steal over his charmed fancy as twilight advanced and the sunlight faded, much of the tranquil enjoyment of the poet Gray,

“ When fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds.”

Sir George Beaumont, an amateur of considerable practical, as well as theoretic, acquirement, and Mr. Uvedale Price, of Foxley, a gentleman of refined taste in pictures, thought and reasoned alike, and very justly, upon these points. They both affirmed *breadth with detail* to be nearly every thing in painting; and that when artists, neglecting the varieties of detail, and of those characteristic features that well supply its place, content themselves with *mere breadth*,

and propose that as the final or sole object of attainment, their productions, and the interest excited by them, are, what a metaphysical treatise is to Shakespeare or Fielding—rather illustrations of principle, than a representation of what is real.

In the present work from the pencil of Claude, *breadth* and *detail* are most admirably united; and we should probably seek through the world in vain for a superior representation of the decline of a day of sultry serenity in a Grecian climate, or should no where find this effect expressed with so much truth, contrasted as is the warm pervading glow, with cool umbrageous overshadowings on the nearer grounds; and where the depicted tranquillity, tells us that even the faintest sounds would find an *echo*. Somehow,—from the mysterious connexion, we may suppose, which links the Fine Arts in sisterly union,—we seem to derive additional evidence of that fact, from the clear reflections which we perceive of Narcissus and other bordering objects in the pellucid water; the reflection of forms and colours, appearing, by some occult magic, to suggest that sounds also would here be reflected, or reverberated.

Yet still—if we do not mistake—the philosophical critic hath not his content so absolute, here, as for him to leave entirely unquestioned whether Claude has been well, or ill, advised, in his introduction into this elegantly composed landscape, of the classic story of Narcissus and Echo; since the spot chosen for these figures, appears perhaps too much exposed to intrusion, for this sequestered subject, and *not sufficiently* secluded to be the voluntary haunt of Wood-nymphs and Naiads; while the nice observer of the arcana of Nature, might possibly object that little or no echo could be expected in a scene so open to a

listant space fanned with breezes from the sea. Here is at least matter for discussion with regard to these points.

Beside which, the personal beauty of the nymphs, and their handsome swain, is not sufficiently evident to give its true poetic zest to the story of Echo and Narcissus. The figure of Narcissus, as Claude has portrayed him, is far indeed from being superlatively beautiful; and to leave the moral to depend entirely on his self-deluding vanity, is making the fable too ridiculous. The vanity of the boy would be credible enough. Such youths there are, and have been in every age; but the nymph is not recorded to have been tasteless, or supposed to have been blind; though she is well known to have been a tattling gossip before she was silenced by Jupiter.

The fable of Echo is elegantly interesting, on account of its pertinent, poetical, and very natural, analogies. She was supposed to be the mythological daughter of Air and Earth; and her favourite residence to have been on the banks of the river Cephissus, obviously because its banks, near Parnassus and Delphi, are lofty, rocky, and perpendicular, and were therefore celebrated—like a certain portion of our own river Wye—for their reverberations of sound. It is here that Claude is not in *poetic keeping*, however much in that which is pictorial. Echo, though of terrestrial birth, had been

“ ——— translated to the skies,”

and given

“ Resounding grace to Heaven’s harmonies.”

She had been one of Juno’s attendants, but, among her resoundings, she had reported scandal, and thus

had excited the displeasure of Jupiter: hence she was deprived of *original* utterance, and only permitted to *reply*. After the infliction of this punishment, to which Claude has here alluded, by placing her hand on her mouth, she fell in love with Narcissus, and pined away, (because in his self-admiration he despised her,) till she was finally metamorphosed into a stone:—At least, thus singeth our old friend Ovid.

But there is another reason why the scene of Echo's love for Narcissus and of the self-admiration of the latter, should have been more *entirely* of a sequestered and Arcadian character; which is, that in the Greek mythology Cephissus was personified, and Narcissus was esteemed to be the son of Cephissus,—literally meaning perhaps no more than that the banks of this delightful river abounded in those beautiful aquatic yellow flowers which are called by his name, and which, leaning over the river-bank, appeared fond of admiring themselves as reflected in its stream. Had Poussin treated this fine subject, we should have seen these analogies—so beautiful and so true to nature—learnedly attended to; we should not have seen Echoes perching on a tree; and if we indulge—as surely we may—in rational admiration of the erudition which rules the poetry of Milton and Poussin, we may not commend the present inadvertencies of Lorraine, or his advisers. The learned Poussin would, as we may imagine, have placed the “sweet queen of parley”—

“ — within her airy cell;
By slow Cephissus' margent green,
And in the violet-embroider'd vale.”

Those who have written the life of this great apos-

tle of landscape-painting, coincide in their statements that his early education was too scanty for him to have supplied mythological, or fabulous, stories, such as this of Narcissus and Echo, from his own knowledge acquired by reading and research. Friends and patrons assisted him; and the mistakes at which we have pointed, were those of his informants. Boydell's biographer of Claude, in accounting for the phenomenon, writes, "It is somewhat singular that he who is said, with much seeming probability to have been scarce able to write his own name; who was certainly, at least, possessed of no real learning, should have adorned his compositions with a variety of histories, which give them even a classical air, and bespeak an acquaintance with many celebrated authors, and with different writers of antiquity: We see probably in these instances, so many marks of the friendship of his several patrons, who, it may be conjectured, pointed out to him such subjects as *they thought* well adapted to form the ornament of his landscapes."

The mystery of the occasional dissonance between Claude's landscapes, and the figures introduced into them is thus explained. "What could he reason but from what he knew?" And, minds variously informed—patrons sometimes, perhaps, not knowing much more of such matters than himself—coming in occasional contact with his ignorance, accounts for much that is heterogeneous, uncritical, and unauthorised by poetry or history, in his compositions; and which only his fine painting could induce us to tolerate.

Upon the whole, and as concerns the present picture, we may venture to aver, that Claude's advisers,

and his adoption of their advice, are at least *in some measure* justified. In *what* measure, and in what respects, we will briefly endeavour to explain, in the way of summary, or result of the above discussion.

The left hand quarter of the composition, where Echo, Narcissus, and the Sleeping Naiad are introduced, *is* a sort of retired and rocky nook, with perpendicular banks; and though those banks are not lofty where the rock is visible and they are not overgrown with trees, we may indulgently suppose them to be sufficiently so, to **reverberate** sound. And here "in close covert, where no profaner eye may look," **is a well-spring**—sufficient warrant rising with its waters, for the introduction of the Sleeping Naiad; if not for that of Narcissus and Echo.

The perfect stillness and quietude of the pure liquid here, afford the self-enamoured youth the finest opportunity of admiring his own beauties. The liquid mirror is perfect; and the analogy between reflected forms and colours, and reverberated sounds, catches, and interests, attention agreeably, and needs neither ghost nor poet to explain its mysteries further.

Good and sufficient warrant then here is, for Claude's introduction of the Sleeping Naiad, who is here so conspicuously, and in an attitude elegantly conceived, supinely reclined, and resting her left arm on her situla; but, truth to say—she has the longest limbs and body of any Naiad whom we ever had the pleasure of seeing; for which we humbly conceive that there is not sufficient analogical authority, considering the *short* course which her streamlet has to run ere it arrives at the sea. However, as this female is "of a race unknown to nature, but created

and rendered credible by Art," criticism will probably not object to allow more than ordinary longitude, as well as occasional wider latitude than usual, to the graphic power.

Of the little waterfall or *cascatella* (as the Italians say) which is seen at a short distance—just within ear-shot—above and beyond the figure of Narcissus, what shall we say,—or what will the reader think? All else in the scene, appears perfectly silent, and whether the soft music of its falling waters, was in the painter's contemplation, as affording an engagement for the nymph Echo, we cannot be certain: yet on the whole we probably ought to give him credit for entertaining this idea.

A river then, somewhat copious and abundant in its flow of waters, and which may be understood as intended for the Cephissus—passes across the mid-ground, and beneath the foot-bridge which is mentioned above; and here we may recognise an allusion to the proper subject of this picture, which poetry and criticism will readily acknowledge, in the circumstance of its being broken into a short cascade, just so near as to be heard, yet so far off as to be heard but faintly, from the fore-ground, or from the station of Echo. All else in the picture is perfectly quiet; and were there no sound (suggested) there could exist no *echo*. The solitary sound that *is* suggested is that of distant waters,

"Dashing soft from rocks around:
Round a holy calm diffusing;
Love of peace, and lonely musing."

LANDSCAPE, WITH THE DEATH OF PROCRIS.

CLAUDE OF LORRAINE.

THIS picture presents us with such a wild scene on the skirts of a forest, with a decayed stump fringed with parasitic foliage near the fore-ground, as is to be seen in all woodland countries, which have been in any degree abandoned to the picturesque operation of neglect and accident. We place it next after the *Narcissus*, in our Claude procession, because it stands in that order in the *Liber Veritatis*, and appears to have been produced during that period of the career of this great artist, when he painted his own figures; while, like that of *Narcissus* and *Echö*, it affords an instance of what the professor Phillips has remarked; that "the idea which governed the introduction of Claude's figures, almost invariably excels their execution."

The figure of *Cephalus* in the present composition is rather finely conceived; and his general action as he rushes forward to his dreadful discovery, is strongly expressive of the astonishment, and overwhelming sentiment of despair, which seizes him as he perceives that in hurling his unerring dart he has mortally wounded his beloved wife.

It appears necessary to the correct understanding of this picture that we should refer to the classic history of *Cephalus* and *Procris*, which carries us back to a period anterior to the Homeric ages, and which Lempriere has ably extracted from *Hesiod*, *Ovid*, and *Hyginus*, as follows:—

"*Cephalus*, King of Thessaly, married *Procris*,

daughter of Erectheus, King of Athens. Aurora fell in love with him and carried him away, but he refused to listen to her addresses, and was impatient to return to Procris. The goddess sent him back, and to try the fidelity of his wife, she made him put on a different form, and he arrived at the house, or palace, of Procris in the habit of a merchant. Procris was deaf to every offer; [but one:] she suffered herself to be seduced by the gold of this stranger, who discovered himself the very moment that Procris had yielded up her virtue. This circumstance so ashamed Procris, that she fled from her husband, and devoted herself to hunting in the island of Eubœa, where she was admitted among the attendants of Diana, who presented her with a dog always sure of his prey, and a dart which never missed its aim, and always returned to the hands of its mistress of its own accord. Some say that the dog was a present from Minos, because Procris had cured his wounds. After this Procris returned in disguise to Cephalus, who was willing to disgrace himself by some unnatural concessions to obtain the dog and the dart of Procris. Procris discovered herself at the moment that Cephalus showed himself faithless, and a reconciliation was easily made between them. They loved one another with more tenderness than before, and Cephalus received from his wife the presents of Diana. As he was particularly fond of hunting, he frequently repaired very early in the morning to the woods, and when tired with excessive toil and fatigue, he laid himself down in the cool shade, earnestly calling for *Aura*, or the refreshing breeze. This ambiguous word, was mistaken for the name of a mistress, and some cruel informer reported to the

jealous Procris, that Cephalus daily paid a visit to a mistress whose name was Aura. Procris too readily believed the information, and secretly followed her husband into the woods. According to his custom, Cephalus retired to enjoy the cooling shade, and invoked Aura. At the name of Aura, Procris eagerly lifted up her head to see her expected rival. Her motion occasioned a rustling among the leaves of the bush that concealed her; and as Cephalus listened, he thought it to be a wild beast, and he let fly his unerring dart. Procris was struck to the heart, and expired in the arms of her husband, confessing that ill-grounded jealousy was the cause of her death."

The classic legend, and Claude's picture, are in pretty good accordance, with a few exceptions, as to the details, which we seem called upon to notice. First, The figure of Procris, according to Lempriere, was concealed from the view of her husband by a bush; Claude has no such bush, and *his* Cephalus must have been as blind and precipitate, as he was jealous, not to have perceived that his wife was no "wild beast," but a jealous-pated animal like himself. The far off buildings may pass for his palace, or for the skirts, or a suburb, of his Thessalian metropolis. Next, by introducing at a short distance, a deer descending a hill, Claude seems to have understood, and to give his admirers to understand, that Cephalus (like the English Tyrrel, who shot William Rufus) had taken aim at one of the denizens of the forest, and the artist not to have been informed of the fable of the unerring dart. Thirdly, How so accurate an observer of nature as Claude, came to omit, in this instance, the forward-cast shadows from a sun not far above the horizon, which kind of sha-

dows, he has so beautifully depicted in his *St. Ursula*, and in other of his works, is not easily explicable. As the sun-light catches so strongly on the shoulders of *Cephalus*, he would have cast, or projected, a shadow forward; and so would *Procris*; and so would the old tree-stump.

But Mr. Ottley (as rarely happens to *him*) has fallen into error in supposing that the sun is "*setting behind a cloud*." *Cephalus* went forth to hunt early in the morning. And *Aura* means early light, as well as the morning breeze; and the former with more strict propriety than the latter; for the word *Aur* itself, in fact, signifying eastern light, came to the Greeks from the Assyrian, or Phenician, language, with which the Hebrew was cognate. This seems not to be exactly the place for etymological researches, or deductions; else, we might mention with great probability, and perhaps maintain by argument, that *Aur-a*, and *Aur-ora*—the first ambrosial breathing of the morn; and that earliest light which precedes the appearance of the sun, are both derived from the primitive radix *Aur*; from whence came also, *Aur-ient* (now *Orient*) and several other words since somewhat disguised by varieties of dialectic enunciation, and of orthography—among them perhaps, *Ur*, that ancient Chaldean city, which was the birth-place of Abraham. But we must return to Claude—

The sun of his picture having ascended from the horizon about twenty degrees, is radiantly emerging from behind a dark cloud, which may easily be conceived to have some poetic and pictorial analogy with the dark jealousy which is here fatally dispelled by a burst of truth. Induced perhaps by the capabilities of beautiful analogy, which more learned eyes

saw in his landscapes, Claude did occasionally indulge in such emblematical allusions, as is proved by his two masterly pictures of the *rise* and the *decline* of the Roman empire; and the whole of the story which is here depicted, appears to be a fabulous legend having some slender local foundation, derived from those heroic ages where tradition glimmers into the light of letters; and its moral lesson to be intended to unfold and display the tragical consequences of mutual connubial *jealousy*.

Of this subject there is a sketch in the *Liber Veritatis*, which is numbered 100; but it bears neither date, nor the original proprietor's name, and has no orbicular sun, or burst of morning radiance. It is very possible that the radiance may be an after thought, or of after introduction, in consequence of some man of letters informing Claude of the primitive Oriental meaning of the word *Aura*; and that the painter in adopting this information, or suggestion, has dispensed with, or—yet more likely—has forgotten, the corollary of those forward projected shadows, the absence of which has already called forth our critical animadversions.

But what shall we say to the Messrs. Valpy, following Mr. Ottley into the abovementioned mistake, and adding to it another?

The Valpy family—from their name, education, descent, and professional habits, have the reputation of being classically learned, and mathematically correct, yet the two main facts which they, or their compiler for them, have mentioned in the twelve lines devoted to this performance in *their* "National Gallery," are both false. They inform their readers, that the sun is *setting*, which in the learned authori-

ties, and in Claude's picture, is *rising*; and that the dead trunk of a tree is seen on the *right*, which is obviously on the *left*. The error concerning the tree-stump is the evident result of the haste in which books are *made* (or *got up*, as the phrase sometimes is) "to sell:" but how will the critical reader excuse the erroneous advertence of the scholars to the catastrophe of the well-known classical story of Cephalex and Procris, of which every school-boy is aware that the time—essential to the true understanding of the legend—was *sun-rise*?

MERCURY INSTRUCTING CUPID.

ANTONIO DA COREGGIO.

OF the birth, parentage, and education, of the wanton and mischievous little deity whom we call Amor, or Cupid, we scarcely know more on classical authority than, that Venus, (or Aphrodite,) was his mother; and even of this fact, Homer appears to have been ignorant, or he (who is all-abundant in information) would at least have informed us of the *existence* of Cupid, whilst recounting the love-inspirations, the amorous blandishments, and the various adventures, of the Goddess of Beauty. It has always appeared to me somewhat unaccountable, that Anacreon, who lived only about two centuries after Homer, should have known so much of Cupid, and Homer himself absolutely nothing at all; and scarcely less odd, that these curious facts, should (as far as I know) have escaped the comments of those learned scholiasts, who have devoted themselves to the elucidation of the mysteries of the Pagan theology.

The later mythologists, however, are sufficiently familiar with the God of Love. Of his "life, character, and behaviour," we know enough; although so little of his origin, and the era and place of his birth. According to some classical authorities, Mercury, whom Coreggio has here depicted as instructing him in the art of reading, was his *father*. Without controverting, or insisting upon, this latter fact, it is sufficiently credible that the deity who in his after existence was to have so much to do in the dictation and construction of *billet doux*, should in his earlier infancy have learned to read; and to whom should his mother have brought him for instruction, but to the God of Letters?

Accordingly, Coreggio has chosen to fancy, very poetically, that Venus has here brought her infant son, while his wings were but budding, to an umbrageous nook (we may suppose) of mount Cyllene, in Arcadia, to receive a lesson; or that Mercury, with more gallantry, has waited upon her in Cytherea. The little deity approaches his task with an exquisitely-conceived child-like timidity, and an air of deferential respect toward his tutor; and Mercury sits, much as a mortal schoolmaster would sit upon such an occasion, but with scarcely any other attire than the *petasus* with which Jupiter had presented him; which, I believe, our great philologist (Horne Tooke) has contrived to render denotive of winged words, and therefore pertinent to the present occasion. The painter has converted this winged cap, which is evidently of Vulcanian workmanship—to a very ornamental head-dress, and a focus of brilliant light; at the same time that it indubitably indicates this deity.

We have before taken occasion to remark that Coreggio, even in his treatment of *divine* subjects,

never affected, or intended, any thing beyond *human* nature in his choice of forms. As in his Madonna and Infant Christ, so here, he has aimed at no deific elevation of character, nor has borrowed aught of conventional elegance from the works of his predecessors, or contemporaries. The whole of the ample stock of his merits with regard to form, is extracted from the store-house of nature. We find Raphael and Julio Romano, abounding in antique graces of form and attitude; Parmegiano refining upon these; and Michael Angelo in quest of elementary grandeur, making frequent quotations from Grecian sculpture; but Coreggio, simply and confidently relying on nature and himself,—quotes *nobody*, either ancient or modern.

And this consideration methinks, might carry us far toward settling the point which has been so much disputed by his biographers, as to whether or not the great painter of Parma, had the advantage of visiting Rome, and of studying there the works of Raphael, and the remains of ancient sculpture?—or, should render this question of small account; since he either did not visit Rome, or if he did so visit, still believed that he saw reason to prefer living models, to sculptured elegance; and—leaving this part of the science of Art to Raphael and his school, chose—with a single and remarkable exception—to reserve *his own* power of idealising, for those displays of colour and chiar-oscuro, the success of which has abundantly vindicated the wisdom of his choice. Ten generations have since elapsed, and his reputation is probably still on the increase.

Hence the present, extremely picturesque composition, without falling in with, or studiously avoiding, or at all adverting to, those preconceived rules of art

which during the age of Coreggio, were promulged and respected in Italy—has entitled itself to, and has obtained, a large portion of that public admiration which follows, the highly prized admiration of the judicious few. That this should have happened during so glorious an age of art as that wherein Antonio lived, is at once evidence of originality, and of high attainment in art: for we need scarcely inform our readers—(what certain writers, however, have shown themselves but too apt to forget) that the greatest works were not framed, or constituted by preexistent rules; but the rules were framed and sanctioned from studying the great works. The critic, therefore, who can here trace no conventional combination of spiral, with pyramidal forms, must seek other modes of appreciation; and other means and terms of critical analysis.

So little is Coreggio beholden to his predecessors; and so much is there of internal evidence of originality in his art, that he effectually persuades us he would have invented painting, had it not previously existed as an Art. He was entirely original, and his fame—we may nearly say, his alone of the Italian painters,—is subject to no deductions on the score of taught conventionalities. Andrea Mantegna has indeed been mentioned as the object of his early imitation; but the Greek alphabet is not more unlike the Hebrew, than our School of Cupid, Holy Family, and Ecce Homo, are in style, unlike the works of Mantegna.

We have before observed that this great founder of the Parmese school, did not professionally deal in the art and *mystery* of elevating, or transcending, Nature by means of ideal, or scientific, abstractions, transferable to other minds through the agency of

the optical sense; but,—this proclamation of ours, must be understood as restricted to ideal beauty of *form*; with regard to *colour*, and the *harmonies of chiar-oscuro*, Coreggio *did* contemplate, and take aims at higher degrees of perfection than he found in other pictures, or in his models, and no other artist has so successfully sent his shafts home to the central circlet of the lofty targe. England may now be proud of possessing more lasting proofs of this accomplishment than any other country of Europe [though certainly the Dresden Magdalen is by no means to be forgotten]. That ideal perfection which it “*hath* entered into the heart of man to conceive;” that unattainable excellence, which is yet the glorious object of a painter’s professional faith; that celestial aspiration which is generated by genius, on the sedate and passive truths of simple nature; that winged theory; that subtle metaphysical machinery—or the pivot and main spring of that mental machinery, which the sculptors, and those painters who imitated their style of forms, applied—aye and successfully, to the production of divine, or ideal shapes, or of stimulating other minds to the conception of such—was applied by Coreggio to a new and different purpose; or perhaps we should write, was used as the means of producing a different modification of the same poetic elevation of the spectator’s intellect. And hence our divine artist, has, by one of the best of our British critics, been much and justly praised for adding to the fascinations of Titian’s colour, the spell of Rembrandt’s *chiar-oscuro*. But it had perhaps been more just in those who have philosophised upon this interesting subject, to have called the spell and fascination, Coreggio’s *own*, since

he was *contemporary* with Titian, and *preceded* Rembrandt by a century.

As Titian and Coreggio lived at the same time, the latter has an equal right with the former, to be regarded as the inventor of breadth and of delicate transition, or degraduation of local tint; as well as of that obscure, or negative nature of shade, wherein resides much of the recondite principle of Coreggio's practice. Art cannot, like Nature, liquify light itself, and mingle the fluid with her colours; and therefore, in the ingenuity of her expedients, or in the reach of her power, she set her favourite Antonio, to seek and find something very like an equivalent, in deepening the obscurity, and increasing the quantity, or breadth of his shades, as is delightfully exemplified in his works, and in those of Rembrandt. Fuseli poetically, yet very truly, says that the charm of *harmony* attended Coreggio's pencil like an enchanted spirit; that his grace and harmony are become proverbial; and that the medium by which breadth of gradation unites two opposite principles;—the coalition* of light and darkness by imperceptible transitions,—are the element of Coreggio's style.

* "This inspires his figures with grace; to this their grace is subordinate. The most appropriate, the most elegant attitudes were adopted, rejected, perhaps [occasionally] sacrificed, to the most awkward, ones, in compliance with this imperious principle: parts vanished, were absorbed, or emerged, in obedience to it. This unison of a whole, predominates over all that remains of him, from the vastness of his cupolas, to the smallest of his oil-pictures.

"The bland central light of a globe, imperceptibly gliding through lucid demi-tints, into rich reflected shades, composes the spell of Coreggio, and affects us with the soft emotions of a delicious dream."

Of the negative nature of shade, and its coalition with light, through the medium of delicate degradation, or exquisite blandishment; and of the breadth, brightness, and profound interest, or magical charm, which, resulting from this apposition, these appliances, and this delicacy of transition—is conferred on Coreggio's broad and impressive lights,—which lights in the present picture, consist almost entirely of carnation tints—this “*Education of Cupid*,” is a remarkable, and an admirable, example; a leading principle of this artist—that of conferring comparative brilliancy on light, by increasing the obscurity and the breadth of shade, being here carried quite to the extreme, if not even—as we sometimes presume to think—a little too far. That it is highly gratifying to taste, is not denied; but judgment, notwithstanding demurs, and may possibly incline some critics to think that the shadows of the flesh-tints, are *perhaps* a little too much blended into the back-ground—more so, we mean, than Nature, if not than Science, would warrant under similar circumstances; and more so than the principle and purpose of that perfect unison which is so beautifully, and so justly eulogised by our late friend, Fuseli, required.

Rather more of reflex light (or perspicuity) in the shadows which fall on Mercury, Venus, and Cupid, and of that lucid demi-tint so much admired by the learned professor, had it been conferred by the hand, and eye, and mind of Coreggio himself—had probably brought the present work still nearer to that ideal perfection which it is the lot of genius, ever to contemplate, but never to attain. But this is a delicate, and somewhat difficult, academical question, and we write of it, though freely, and without restraint, with according deference; nor in using the term *Nature*,

as it is used above, may we sink, or forget, that this word as it respects the art of Painting, comprehends what is analogous to, and concordant with, the constitution of the *mind* of man, as well as what is physically discernible through his visual organs. Akenside even sings, that

——— *Mind* ALONE,
The living fountain in itself contains,
Of beauteous, and sublime.

Consequently, that what we see of external nature, are but the outward and visible *signs*—or concomitants only—of which the *things signified*—things which the mind holds sacred and congenial with herself—are the essence and entity. Notwithstanding which, Art is necessarily constrained to use some combination, or modification, or other, of those external and visible signs—just as the poet employs words, although his known purpose be to impart thoughts and ideas of things; because this is *his* only practicable mode of addressing the *minds* of others.

Some, with the coarse-minded confidence of certain modern vocabulists, would persuade the public, that those truths of external Nature, which are rudimental to the art of the painter, and even the operations of intellect upon those truths, are so obvious, that he who runs may read them; and that there is scarcely more room for difference concerning them, than concerning those geometrical dogmata which lay down the relations between lines and angles so as to leave no room for difference of opinion, or judgment, amongst men: which is just as if a man should set himself up for a critic in music, who has neither taste nor “music in his soul,”—*because* he is not insensible to *sound*. Colours, light and shade, and forms, (say these much assured persons) are

equally evident to all. These are analytical of the painter's art; and these are seen by carmen and coal-porters, as well as by bishops and academicians. The literary logic, or pen-parroting, is thus complete. They stop not, and care not, to take into the account, that men are differently organised, both physically and mentally; and that nature and education have left some destitute of tasteful discernment, who are yet as forward to philosophise, as was Lucian's friend Hermotimus*. We may perhaps "forgive them, forasmuch as they know not what they do:" but, I conceive we ought not to refrain from setting the public on its guard against their widely spread, and loudly trumpeted, errors and misrepresentations. We trust that neither Mercury nor our readers will object to this little digression—if such it should be esteemed.

As we have remarked, in treating of Coreggio's Holy Family, he preferred—even when deific or celestial personages were the subjects of his pencil—the principle of *selecting* such forms as were susceptible of grand and beautiful masses of light, shade,

* Tooke's translation of this curious and argute dialogue, is by far the best; of which a small fraction is subjoined:—

L. For philosophising with discernment, and for judging with taste, says Reason, it is not enough that we examine all with our own eyes: something else is requisite.

H. And what may that be?

L. Nothing more, my admirable friend, than a great stock of critical acumen, ingenuity, sagacity, judgment, and a sharp and piercing mind cleared of all conceit and prejudice, as his necessarily must be who would form a just judgment of matters of so great moment. For without that, all the rest will be of no service to us. No little time also, (says Reason, whom I am now letting speak instead of myself,) is requisite to it: and though all from whence we are to choose, lie before us, it requires to be long, consistently, and frequently, considered.”—

and colour, from among these concomitant signs to be found in "nature as it is," to that of *idealising*; we therefore find in his works—with perhaps the single exception of his head of Jesus Christ, which shall be the subject of future comment—none of the "brain-born imagery" mentioned by Proclus, brought to light and rendered palpable and obvious by the sculptors of ancient Greece, and the subject of so much occasional critical *encomium*. And here is in the works of Coreggio, no seeking or striving after those central and faultless forms which Reynolds advocates, and no recognition of the technic phrase, or the idea, of "Nature as it ought to be."

The scene is not laid in the celestial regions, though the actors are celestial personages; and Coreggio's Venus, though eminently graceful, assumes no airs of divinity, or of voluptuous blandishment; but presents herself simply and meekly in her maternal character, divested of amorous witcheries. But we, notwithstanding, discover in the face and figure of the goddess much of the cast, or kind, of beauty which appertains to the handsome women of the Parmese territory, and of the north of Italy*; just as in the Venuses, and other female beauties of Rubens, we discover the felt and acknowledged loveliness of the Netherlands. Coreggio appears to have believed (as Rubens believed) and with reason, as well as from sentiment—that the female beauty which his works displayed, would sufficiently arouse and affect the feelings and the taste of those among his contemporaries, to whom it was addressed.

* The local peculiarity of countenance of these Coreggiesque ladies is chiefly observable in the conformation of their eyes and manner of seating them under their brows.

We scarcely recollect a painted Venus more entirely naked than the present; and none else is so modestly contrived. In an attitude certainly of considerable elegance, and abounding in beauteous undulations of contour; but still, calculated to interest us *chiefly* by the interest which the goddess herself takes in the education of her son: whilst the little godling, with his callow, or half-fledged wings, his fair and silky hair, which seems just beginning to cluster into curls, and his unsophisticated childish and charming gracefulness, having advanced with an infantile timidity, calculated to please a poet and to interest every tasteful observer, toward his preceptor, holds his scroll-book (which is also held by Mercury) with the left hand, while he points inquiringly, and with becoming aptitude, with the right, to the very letter or word to which his attention is solicited,—

“Conning his task with mickle care.”

The artless innocence of this lovely little Cupid, as seen in profile, is quite fascinating, and cannot be too much admired. The budding plumage of his wings is of light blue, yellow, and white, and they are attached to his shoulders with due considerateness on the part of the artist: there is at least the sign of a tendonous and muscular apparatus for moving them—a matter on which the generality of painters reflect too little—But, lo! a phenomenon! the goddess herself also is furnished with a pair of *wings* of dark greenish blue. This is quite unusual, and probably unique; but is an original thought, perfectly concordant with the character of Venus, whether regarded as Planet, or as the gadding goddess of Beauty and Love; and these smaller breadths

or dashes of dull, cold, colour, are in excellent counterpoint to the flesh tints.

The God of Letters, meanwhile, sits just in the frequent, convenient, and unstudied, attitude of a mortal teacher, letting his little scholar rest the scroll which contains his lesson against his tutor's thigh. There is a rich glow of active vitality pervading his figure: but else the painter has trusted entirely—or almost entirely—to the *petasus*, and the winged sandals, which mark the son of Maia, for our recognition of his celestial character; nor has he other dress than a slight flourish of blue drapery.

The back-ground of our Academy of Infant Love is everywhere leafy and verdant, like the acclivity of a Cyprian or Arcadian mountain, excepting a few touches of fractured rock nearly over the figure of Cupid, which take up some of the flesh tints with alliterative effect, and keep the picture far aloof from that "cut out" imputation which attaches to the majority of the works which preceded this of Coreggio, both in Italy and Germany: but this verdure is, to a certain degree, harmoniously obscured, or held in just *keeping*, by the prevalence of a tinge of dun brown, which is in excellent apposition to the carnations.

The contours are undulating and freely pronounced, with here and there an emphatic swelling sweep of the pencil: but it is not the terminations of his forms that seems to engage Coreggio's solicitude, as it does that of most other painters: it is not the outline of his figures, which not unfrequently melts away, and partially reappears—it is not the partially evanescent *outline*, but what its gently expressive influence embraces; the seemingly circulating, warm, and pearly

varieties; the pulpy palpitations of vitality in his broad lights—that ravish our sensibilities in the works of this extraordinary artist.

His whole work is performed with a fine, full, and flowing pencil, and a lavish outlay of colour, applied under a glowing fancy. The *impasto* is charmingly expressive of the soft and smooth firmness and elasticity—the actual texture, of flesh, with its semi-transparent integument. The narrow slips of drapery are merely ornamental flourishes of crimson and blue, introduced to enrich the canvas; enliven the work; give tone to the carnations; and fill up the system of harmony: and the discrimination between youthful, active, and manly, vigour; and female, and infantile delicacy of complexion, is carefully and admirably observed. The performance abounds in those magical varieties of insensible transition of tint, for which Coreggio is so justly famed. In the neck and bosom of Venus, it is delicately fair, but warms into a more rosy glow in her mildly and maternally animated countenance; while the dark and quiet verdure of the umbrageous back-ground, shows off the whole aggregation of the carnation tints of the flesh, with all the splendour derived from its well-balanced juxtaposition. It promotes, too, another purpose:—Its local tone acts on the figures as *shadow*, displaying, with every brilliant advantage, the broad light; which, falling on the beautiful bust of Venus, streams down her right arm toward the Cupid and Mercury, and produces an unostentatiously splendid general effect, that is greatly to be admired.

Concerning the delightful little Cupid, it further may safely be affirmed that Sir Joshua Reynolds never dreamed that the same apartment of the National

Gallery of Great Britain, was destined to contain his own infant St. John, and this Cupid from the pencil of Coreggio, which it so strongly resembles. As Coreggio's picture was in the royal cabinet at Madrid, during the life-time of Sir Joshua, he never could have seen it, because he never was in Spain: but there exists a small copy, or duplicate, of it, somewhere, painted by Coreggio himself, which it is probable the English painter *did* see in the course of his foreign travels, and could not forget. Upon many occasions our distinguished countryman has shown by his works, that he had an eye and a mind of much sensibility toward the innocent and unpretending graces of children—of all gracefulness the most genuine, the most touching, the most picturesque.

If we are correctly informed, the Marquis of Londonderry brought this picture from Spain about fifteen years ago. It is, therefore, not improbably, one of the very pictures to which we have before alluded, as having been presented to the Emperor Charles V., with the liberal concurrence of Julio Romano, by the contemporaneous Duke of Milan.

THE ECCE HOMO!

ANTONIO DA COREGGIO.

THE composition of this capital work is simple, pertinent, and completely divested of all extraneous and unessential matter. The Roman proconsul, having led, or sent, forth the Saviour, stands just within the pretorium, (or judgment-hall,) or appears through an aperture thereof; and seems withdrawing from fur-

ther communion with the Hebrew populace, as he pronounces the emphatic words which give name to the present picture.

The assemblage is entirely divested of the brutal rabble, who, as the evangelists inform us, were waiting without during the examination of Jesus Christ; and who, when their victim reappeared, vociferated, "Crucify him!" They are supposed to be behind the *spectator*; a supposition which may assist him toward conceiving how he should feel if he was actually present at this important act of the sacred tragedy—this crisis of human redemption. But, of the holy women, who had been waiting the issue of the trial without the judgment-hall, two are introduced. The Madonna has fainted, or sunk into a death-like swoon, at the sight of her son, brought forth in regal mockery, and in the bondage of a criminal: the other, though obviously under much concern, is supporting the Holy Mary, and is but little seen; and, still less seen, because somewhat obscured by shadow, is a helmed Roman soldier, robust, and rugged in character, but yet with a touch of pity in his look, as if, notwithstanding his military occupation, he was not without compunctious visitings:—but the brave are generally humane. These, with the figure of Christ, which is of course central and principal, make up the whole of the depicted group.

The air and look of Pilate, and the action of his hand, are sufficiently dignified and expressive; unpretending, magisterial, and in strict accordance with the sacred text; which says, he went forth and said, "Behold, I bring him to you that you may know that *I find no fault* in him." Then came Jesus forth,

wearing the crowns of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them—" *Ecce Homo!*"

This is the important and profoundly pathetic point of time, wisely selected by the painter. His Christ is brought forth ignominiously bound by the wrists, wearing his thorny crown, which has pierced and lacerated his divine forehead, and distained his neck and visage with blood. He wears also the robe of royal purple, which, in mockery, has been cast over his shoulders. This head of the Saviour has much of that fine godlike character dimly suffused, as it were, with human suffering, which was afterward adopted by the Caraccii and their school, as elementary and canonical, in the sacred subjects which they took from the New Testament, as may be seen in their works wherever the Saviour is introduced. *Their* head of Christ, is *this* of Coreggio, so modified by concomitant circumstances, as to be suited to the several occasions of its introduction. Almost without a metaphor, we might say, this divine *character* was created by Coreggio, and pictorially propagated by the patriarchs of the school of Bologna.

In *expression*, the countenance of Jesus is here *resigned*. That is its broad, general, designation. In describing the expression of Coreggio's "Christ on the Mount of Olives," we remember to have used the words, "Human anguish *subsiding into* divine resignation:" but between *that* moment and the time of his exhibition by Pontius Pilate, his trial, or examination, had taken place—wherefore he is here represented as more perfectly resigned,—a little regretful perhaps, but yet so abounding in benevolence,

or rather philanthropy, that we cannot—as fellow mortals existing under the same dispensation of Providence with the Hebrew nation,—but gratefully recognise the regret which it discovers, as being felt on the score of those mistaken Jews, who are brutally vociferating, “ Away with him ! Crucify him ! Crucify him ! ”

The pious Hervey, whose popular *Meditations* have proved so influential in the cause of Christianity, exhorts his religious readers to incite their minds to dwell on the immeasurable superiority of him who died *pro Inimicis*, over those who have heroically died *pro Patria*. Coreggio's head of Christ has, virtually speaking, the very same sublime moral ; or illustrates, exemplifies, and recommends, rather than enforces, that moral, with all the charm of the most persuasive of the Arts, added to the force of truth. Here is, moreover, a godlike innocence untarnished in its suffering by human transgression : here is wisdom, sanctitude, purity, without severity ; and withal a sustaining, imperturbable, equanimity ; an approach toward the ineffable, which only painting could have displayed,—that is transcendental in Art, and should be irresistible in its effects on human gratitude. The divine hope and prayer for forgiveness of the tremendous, though indispensable, trespass, which was soon afterward vocally uttered on the cross, seems here tacitly existing in the mind of the Mediator. Coreggio has anticipated the Evangelists.

When our divine artist came to paint this head—rendered aware that it must not only be the climax of the present composition, but the acmé of all the possible aims of a Christian painter's art—his facul-

ties appear to have dilated with the demands of the important occasion, and he seems to have felt at length, what his previous experience had not taught him—namely, that the blandishments of *chiar-oscuro* and colour, however expanded, refined, and enforced, would not, without his expanding and refining upon the human countenance also, enable him to reach

—— “ the height of his great argument ;
Or to assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man.”

He seems to have been convinced that the imitation of the forms of human nature alone, would not carry him through the task of depicting the spiritual victory of the agonized Son of God, and Saviour of mankind ; and to have been stimulated by the greatness of the occasion, to elevate his imagination, and aim at an ideal perfection (which it may be that he had previously sought for, and not found, in Nature) upon the principle of the great sculptors of antiquity ; and for once—exalted to sublimity by his religious, combined with his artistical, aspirations—to incorporate a “ brain-born image,” or ideal *form*, with his ideal breadths of *chiar-oscuro* and *colour* : nor will artist or critic, presume to controvert, but on the contrary they will admire, the wisdom of his reserving this effort for his “ *Ecce Homo*,” and entwining the crowning garland of his professional fame, as far as that fame depended on his easel works,—with the Saviour’s coronet of thorns.

The naked arms, hands, and body, of Jesus Christ, are drawn with exemplary academic power. His breast receives the principal breadth of bright light ; which, after gloriously illustrating his expressive

countenance, gradually abates downward, with exquisite transition, re-brightening on his cord-bound hands and arms, and on the forehead, brow, and cheek, of the Holy Mary.

The rest of the figure of the Madonna—whose soul is for the moment absorbed in maternal sorrow—hooded and attired in dark blue drapery, is deeply overshadowed; which is not only in good poetic analogy with her profound grief; but, opposed as it is to the brilliant carnations, imparts a gratifying degree of clearness to the shadowed flesh tints, and gives a lucid and vigorous effect to the whole work. The Mother of Christ, who beholds her celestial Son brought forth in bondage, and hears the vociferating rabble, is in the very extremity of mental and maternal suffering. *No* sorrow can exceed *her* sorrow. She is completely exhausted and overcome by the magnitude of her distress. In fact, she appears as if she had just expired, or was on the point of expiring, from the intensity of her sufferings: and this apparent departure of vitality, and the extreme lassitude it occasions, is seen through her whole figure, even to her fingers' ends: her hands have as completely swooned away, as the rest of her person. There is no more of nervous agency, or obedience to volition, in her finely painted fingers, than of speculation in her dying eyes; volition itself being in fact (and of course) suspended, with animation.

It is scarcely worth mentioning—being a mere speck on snow—that the hand which Pilate holds forth as he renders up his prisoner, is rather effeminate in its form and dimensions:—too much that of a *petit maitre*, or a Sybarite, to have properly belonged to a Roman prefect, or proconsul. Its action, how-

ever, when taken with the bland look by which it is accompanied, persuades us that he must have risen from his examination of Christ, as nearly a convert to the Christian faith as was the Felix who trembled before the truths uttered by St. Paul. In the countenance of Pilate, there is not the faintest shade of severity: on the contrary, it is all suavity, emanating from a fair-complexioned and gentle-minded man. He wears an oriental head-dress—a jewel-fronted turban of blue—and a yellow robe; and appears in all respects mild and candid. The architecture of the pretorium—inconspicuous in its features and forming, excepting where a small portion of light wall connects the lights which fall on Pilate and the Saviour—a breadth of middle-tint—constitutes a bond of union between the lights and shadows, which keeps the whole together in excellent unison.

This fine picture, recently purchased for the public, together with that of the Academy of Cupid (at the price of £.11,500), of the Marquess of Londonderry, if we are rightly informed, has for fourteen or fifteen years been a much admired ornament of the collection at Holderness House. It came from the Colonna palace at Rome; and as it was always held in the highest esteem there, we cannot but indulge in the anticipation that it will be equally so in the National Gallery of England; nor are we without hope that the exhibition of *such* a picture will have some considerable influence in removing the prejudice that has long existed here against the admission of works of art into protestant churches. During the life-time of Sir Joshua Reynolds and Mr. West, the then Bishop of London, and his ecclesiastical chapter, refused to them and four other academicians, the

opportunity of painting pictures for the cathedral of St. Paul; and the prevalence of this deplorable prejudice has greatly retarded the progress of historical painting in Britain. Probably the *only* true way of propagating the gospel, is by convincing the unconvinced of its divinity; and Coreggio's *Ecce Homo*, while it pathetically and powerfully calls forth our best sympathies, should thoroughly satisfy the sceptical, that he who could look and suffer *THUS*, *must* have been commissioned from above.

In the three pictures from the pencil of this justly admired artist, with which our National Gallery is now enriched, we behold profoundly interesting approximations toward the perfection of unsophisticated *painting*; such as we might elsewhere seek in vain. They are at once a valuable lesson and legacy, left by Coreggio to future generations of artists, in exemplary proof of the utter worthlessness and folly of resorting to meretricious means. Such examples as these should teach, though precepts fail.

THE RESTORATION OF THE ARK OF THE COVENANT.

SEBASTIAN BOURDON.

THE Restoration of the Ark is remarkable, not only for its air of originality, but for a certain primitive physiognomy. Without following precisely in the track of Titian, or Poussin, or that of any other painter, Sebastian here successfully carries back the mind of the scriptural scholar to the times of the Israelitish patriarchs and prophets; and his works stand contrasted in this respect to the contempora-

neous productions of Claude of Lorraine. Claude, Poussin, and Sebastian, were all great artists; were fellow countrymen; and their names will descend, with honour to France and themselves, to a remote posterity: but while the first of these is all ignorance, except concerning what is *present*, Poussin, and the latter, abound with erudite intelligence of the *past*; and if Bourdon's reputation depended (which it does not) on this picture alone, of the return of the Ark, his name would float buoyantly, and with triumphal honour, "adown the stream of Time."

Prophets and poets have been occasionally "rapt into *future* times." It proclaims scarcely less of inspiration when a painter is able to retrospect through the dim obscurity of three thousand years of the *times that are past*, and transport us to the debatable land of Kirjath-jearim and Beth-shemesh, so successfully as in the present production from the pencil of Sebastian Bourdon; or as Niccolo Poussin has to Ashdod, or Ekron, in his Plague of the Philistines; or as in his Finding of Moses, to the banks of the Nile and the more ancient metropolis of Egypt.

Sebastian Bourdon, one of the founders, and the first *rector*, of the French Academy of Arts, was a man of extensive knowledge, profound habits of thought, and of that rare disinterested virtue, which, if not the constant concomitant of these, seldom exists without them. The rich results of all are before us in our National Gallery.—We shall presently adduce his "Return of the Ark," in proof of his deep thinking and the reach of his antiquarian knowledge; and a single anecdote, which we shall here relate, will serve to evince his self-denying virtue.

In the year 1652, Bourdon became principal painter

to Queen Christina of Sweden, when certain pictures brought by her father, Gustavus Adolphus, from the pillage of Prague, having in that barbarous military age remained more than five years in their packages, her majesty desired Sebastian to see them unpacked, and examine them. The artist, with manifest pleasure, made a most favourable report of their merits. The queen was in a gracious mood, and replied—"They pray, Bourdon, accept them for yourself."—"I am duly sensible of the honour, madam; but beg to decline the gift, (rejoined the painter.) They are some of the very first pieces in Europe. Most fitting it is that they should be in your majesty's possession; and you ought never to part with them."

Christina courtesied lower than regal etiquette, and as low as royal condescension, would permit; and we may hope found other means of rewarding the rare virtue of her servant. She sat to him at about this youthful period of her life, for her portrait, and the picture, which is now [May 20, 1834] exhibiting among those of the late Duke of Berri, attests the extraordinary reach as well as variety of the powers of Sebastian, and proves that his pencil could as faithfully record a present truth, as it could portray, under the retrospective eye and mind of its master, the poetry of antiquity.

But it may perhaps not prove unworthy of passing remark, that to the above-mentioned casualty of the artist's nobly declining the proffered gift of the queen, we owe those subsequent pictorial decapitations which we have elsewhere in our Catalogue regretted; but to this, we also owe, that when Christina afterward abdicated the crown of Sweden, she was enabled to take the pictures with her to Rome, and that they

finally became the basis of that collection of the Duke of Orleans, of which some portion is repositied in our National Gallery, and others in that of Lord Francis Leveson Gower.

The subject of the fine picture before us, is ostensibly taken from the book of Samuel. That Josephus relates the return, or restoration, of the Ark, better than it is *there* related, we may not and will not say; but it seems necessary for us to tell the story, in order to the true understanding of the picture; and if we do so partly in the words of the Jewish historian, it is because they are more succinct than those of the Bible. We shall however abbreviate from both.

The Philistines had been so successful in fight against the children of Israel, that they had even captured the sacred Ark itself; but they were soon after grievously diseased with the hæmorrhoids, (or dysentery;) their deity, Dagon, had fallen before the ark of Jehovah; and their country was overrun with myriads of mice; all of which calamities the prevailing party among them attributed to their retention of the Hebrew Ark; yet, in order to satisfy that minority whose superstition inclined them the other way, it was agreed that they should have recourse to a species of oracular appeal; and they further agreed to conciliate the God of the Jews—the presumed author of their afflictions—by an offering of five golden mice, (one from each of the five great cities of Philistia,) and five golden hæmorrhoids. How the latter were fashioned, it might be somewhat difficult to guess: but as Josephus, in treating of them, employs the word “images,” we may suppose that the idea of abstract personification had begun to

obtain in the world before it was mythologically adopted by the Greeks, and that the disease, under which the Philistines were suffering, was *personified*; and the hæmorrhoids modelled and cast, like the mice. These golden propitiatory offerings, the book of Samuel says, were put into a coffer—Josephus says into a bag—and laid upon the Ark; which, in conformity with the plan of their appeal, was placed upon a new cart, to which milch kine were yoked, and they were driven to “a place where three ways met.”

Somewhat less whelmed in the superstitions of priestcraft, than their Egyptian contemporaries, the Philistines believed that if the cows were left to themselves, they would be miraculously directed. But, five lords of the Philistines followed at a distance, in order to watch and report the result.

Arrived at the mystic spot where the three ways met, Josephus says, “the kine went *the right* way, and as if some person had driven them;” which is to say, that, of the three roads, they of themselves took that which led toward the possessions of the children of Israel. “Now there was a certain village of the tribe of Judah, of which the name was Beth-shemesh, and to that village did the kine go; and though there was a great and good plain before them to proceed in, they went no further, but stopped the cart there.”

The book of Samuel adds, “And they of Beth-shemesh were reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley; and they lifted up their eyes and saw the Ark, and rejoiced to see it: and the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite, and stood there, where there was a great stone.” It was a rock which

had the particular denomination of "The Stone of Abel;" and it forms a lofty and conspicuous feature of Bourdon's picture.

This miraculous stopping of the cattle and of the Ark, is the moment judiciously selected by the painter. The "Return of the Ark" once belonged to Sir Joshua Reynolds, and was very appropriately bequeathed by him to Sir Geo. Beaumont, in compliment to the taste and talent of the baronet, in the art of Landscape-painting; and he was justly proud of the gratifying legacy. It was so great a favourite with Sir Joshua, that in his fourteenth discourse, where he purposed to set before the students examples of the poetic style of landscape-painting, "the Return of the Ark" is one of the only two which he adduces. He therein states that, "to point out all the circumstances that give nobleness, grandeur, and the poetic character, to style in landscape, would require a long discourse of itself; and the end would then perhaps be but imperfectly attained. The painter who is ambitious of this perilous excellence, must catch his inspiration from those who have cultivated with success the poetry, as it may be called of the Art, and they are few indeed."

"The Return of the Ark from captivity, by Sebastian Bourdon, is one. With whatever dignity those histories are presented to us in the language of Scripture, this style of painting possesses the same power of inspiring sentiments of grandeur and sublimity, and is able to communicate them to subjects which appear by no means calculated to receive them. The Ark, in the hands of a second-rate master, would have little more effect than a common waggon on the highway: yet this subject is so poeti-

cally treated throughout; the parts have such a correspondence with each other; and the whole, and every part of the scene is so *visionary*, [used in the sense of *visiones*, or ideal conceptions] that it is impossible to look at it without feeling, in some measure, the enthusiasm which seems to have inspired the painter.”

This praise, although just, is vague and general, and only generally just. In this respect the encomium of Reynolds is congenial with the picture of Bourdon. The reader has seen our admission of the intelligence of this artist, as compared with the ignorance of Claude; which is nearly all that we meant to say: for when we come to details, we find that though Sebastian abstains from those common-place modernisms, to which Claude, with all his transcendent professional merit, was but too liable, he was less learned—less thoroughly informed on the subjects he undertook to treat,—than Titian or Poussin; and far from being absolutely learned, or *thoroughly* informed. Reynolds, in praising him, has restricted himself, as we have seen, to general considerations, and, so far as vague generalities go, his praise of Bourdon is not to be impeached: but when we descend to local particulars and antiquarian details, we are compelled to acknowledge—with all our admiration of his frank disinterestedness, and his professional attainment—that the French artist is far from being critical. In proceeding to render this manifest, we shall not collect our commendation, or animadversions, into masses, but leave them to arise as they may out of our explanatory description.

That the Israelites should have named one of their towns or cities *Beth-shemesh*, which literally means

House (or temple) of the *Sun*, may seem odd to those who do not reflect how very frequent were their aberrations, or apostasies from the worship of the true God: but so it was; and Bourdon, apparently aware of the circumstance, has thought he could not do less than build the chief edifice of his city sacred to the Sun, of some bright material—probably white marble; so far is well. But the *Beth* looks in form and architectural character, rather too modern—too much like the distant view of Jedburgh Abbey, and too little like Aggur-koof, and the lofty square watch-towers, or *migdols*, that were then common in Canaan and Assyria. Somewhat nearer, stands a low *round* tower of vast circumference, which is a painted anachronism, the Hebrew towers, before the accession of Saul (and even long after), having been square, or pyramidally inclined, like those of their Chaldean ancestry and those of Egypt.

Beth-shemesh is built on the banks of an ample river, far too wide for the Jordan—but that is a good fault—which river, appearing to proceed from the far distant mountains of Lebanon, flows past the city of the Sun, and thence diagonally athwart the landscape. It breaks into a cascade, with good advertence, nearly beneath the rock of Abel, and passing under a nearer bridge, quits the landscape at the left hand corner of the fore-ground. This bridge should not have been *arched*—no arch having been constructed for ages after the time of the prophet Samuel and the return of the ark. Till we saw this arched bridge, we were prepared, from reading Otteley and Reynolds, to expect clumsy square piers, connected by huge planks, such as the bridge over the Euphrates, described by ancient authors—or some-

thing equally inartificial. But Sebastian's buildings, at a short distance beyond the bridge, *are* of more unusual and primitive forms, and are much to be commended. Yet after all that may be urged, or admitted in favour of Bourdon; or even of Titian and Poussin, the true air of learned obsolescence in very ancient architecture, is a path of art, which enterprising painters have yet to open and to tread. Martin has made some approximations toward it, in his invention of an Assyrian order: but there is yet much scope. Of antediluvian architecture nothing has been accomplished, and scarcely any thing attempted. We read in Berosus of antediluvian cities; Panti-byblon and Sisparis are named; but what do we know of them more than their names? What have the poetical painters taught us—What has it yet entered into the imagination of man to conceive—concerning the architecture of the two thousand years whose productions were engulfed in the great deluge? Nothing, that Art has yet rendered manifest.

Over this arched bridge the sacred Ark has just passed, and the kine having arrived nearly under the impending rock of Abel, which is placed almost in the centre of the picture, are there mysteriously standing still. This Sir Joshua felt, and we all feel, to be an affecting circumstance. The five lords of the Philistines who follow it, stand on the bridge (which may be supposed to be neutral ground) in groups of two and three, expressing by their upheld arms and wondering looks, the degrees of surprise and mystic astonishment which they severally feel. The Hebrew peasants, not less surprised, but of course more devoutly reverential, are some of them worshipping, and others in the act of reverently

kneeling, or falling prostrate before the Ark. The ark itself,—the common centre of solicitude to both parties, and to the Jews the miraculous manifestation of Deific presence—is properly depicted, with its projecting staves and cherubic terminations at either end (much as we find it delineated in Calmet, and described in Exodus), standing on the wain ; but as there is neither coffer nor bag containing the propitiatory offerings of the Philistines, placed upon it ; this must be supposed to be in the carriage beneath.

The nearest of the draft-cattle is a white ox, or heifer. It is clear from the text that they should both have been milch-cows ; we think, they should both have been white ; and as the place where they stopped is specified both by Josephus and the Book of Samuel, to have been a wheat-field,—a wheat-field it should have been. At least there should have been indications that the equipage was on the borders of a wheat-field.

The sacred Ark, with its carriage and other simple appurtenances, are exceedingly to the purpose. The most imposing and picturesque feature in the whole composition, is the impending rock, or “ stone of Abel,” nearly under which the cattle have mysteriously stopped. This rock is central, conspicuous, and so lofty, that we almost fancy at the first glance, the Ark of *Noah* is resting on its summit. This is poetic exaggeration ; of the right kind, and in the right place. The name, the bright summit, the unusual, yet natural form, and the extraordinary height of the rock of Abel, dilate the imagination, and induce us to forget for the moment, the hard task which the Israelites must have had in subsequently labouring up to its summit, as they did with their

sacrifice to Jehovah. Another circumstance which touches the imagination electrically, and contributes its full share to the general effect, is the perturbed and ominous sky, which seems all in motion, and as if the world below was but in a state of subservient agency, or passiveness, to super-terrestrial power, "to us invisible, or dimly seen."

Although we have been compelled to a few animadversions, (which are not yet quite exhausted,) the reader readily perceives that here is much to enjoy and to praise. The Ark, with its simple carriage and draft-cattle; the appropriate actions of the Philistines and Jews; the picturesque "stone of Abel;" the white distant buildings, and the suggested motion in the sky—main features of the composition—are all pertinent, and ably treated. The cows (as they *ought* to have been—for they left calves behind them) having crossed a river, shows entrance into a foreign territory; or at least, would have been received as good pictorial evidence of that fact, had the rock of Abel been placed on the Hebrew side of the stream. It remains that we add a few sentences concerning the colouring and chiar-oscuro.

Sebastian appears to have supposed that positive, or vivid, colours, associated only with cheerful and lively trains of ideas. If a Fête Champêtre of Watteau were hanging next to his Return of the Ark, it would probably confirm us in the belief that he is right in this—and therefore what little of blue, red, and yellow, he has ventured to employ, is engaged in the draperies of the Philistines and Hebrews. The moving clouds are gray; and the water is chiefly of this neutral colour, as it would necessarily be, underneath such a sky. The rest of the performance,

excepting the high lights, is pervaded by the grave dun-brown, of which Vandyck made such abundant use, and which some painters have thought—Sebastian Bourdon apparently amongst them—allied, by virtue of some occult association of ideas—to sublimity.

The effect is therefore somewhat monotonous with regard to colour; we feel it to be so, even after we have conceded that in such subjects, positive or local colour should not obtrusively predominate, but be held in due subservience to grave, or majestic, sentiment.—This monotony of colour, however, might find many approvers—perhaps admirers—were not the chiar-oscuro also monotonous, and consequently deficient in degradations and in expression of space. Some darker touches seem wanting, in order to clear out and detach from each other, the parts leftward of the lofty rock: and, for more reasons than one, we may reasonably suspect the Ark and its carriage to have become darker since they were painted. It should be remembered that the Ark was bright with gilding, and the wain was new.—I incline to think that the white heifer, which at present seems rather too much of a spot, was originally massed, or connected with the light on the falling water, through means of the original brightness of the wain and Ark. And I should add at once, that this picture wanted finishing, if I had not heard from good judges, who have been abroad and seen other works of Sebastian Bourdon (which I have not), that “his least finished pictures, are his best.”

With the sequel we have little to do—nothing indeed, but as the future may reflect on the present. On the stone of Abel, which is so particularly speci-

fied by Josephus and by the author of the Book of Samuel, as being the place where the kine stopped, they were afterward offered up as a holocaust to the Lord. Yes—these poor cows were religiously sacrificed, notwithstanding they had been inspired to come “the right way,” and had safely brought to Bethshemesh their sacred charge. To be sure, these are mysteries not for us to scan, but we may be permitted to observe that in Egypt these cows would have been at least canonised and *installed*.

Here is no sign, or symptom of the palm-trees, for which Judea was famous. The two French-looking trees, scant of foliage, which spring from the nearer bank of the river, and partially hide the rock, are, as we think, of no advantage to the composition; and assuredly the corn-field, where the Jewish peasantry were ingathering their harvest, as it would have added both to the true rendering of the story, and the picturesque beauty of the work, should not have been dispensed with. At least, such is our opinion; yet we are willing to suppose, or to admit, that it may have been thought of, and perhaps suppressed, for the sake of not impairing sublimity by multifariousness of parts:—which reflection brings us back to a critical opinion of Reynolds, that is by no means unworthy of the reader's consideration.

Sir Joshua thinks “The Return of the Ark, a subject which appears by no means calculated to receive the sentiment of sublimity.” Let us for a moment, treat this a moot point. A critical philosopher who had not the honour of agreeing with the distinguished president, might at least be allowed to *think* and to *state*, that an antique town and temple on the margin of a noble river; a conspicuous and memorable rock;

a simple bridge, connected with near buildings of very remote antiquity; a corn-field, with cattle; and *human figures animated by profound religious emotions*, to say nothing of an awful sky—were *grand* landscape materials; and to doubt whether if these were skilfully combined, the simplicity that is essential to the sublime, must necessarily be merged in multifariousness of parts? As to what Reynolds says of the Ark on its carriage, having little more effect than a common waggon on the highway, in the hands of a second-rate master; his friend, Gainsborough, has shown us that, under the hands of a first-rate master, a common waggon drawn by a team of horned cattle, is no bad subject, even without a sacred Ark. *He* could even have conferred *sublimity* on such a waggon if he had so pleased, by his masterly mode of treatment, and by the elevated ideas which he possessed the power to awaken, and associate with rusticity. Be the subject of a picture what it may, it is what is derived from the mind and hand of the artist which constitutes its poetry; and, that inferior artists mar fine subjects, is sufficiently well known.

Aphorisms, or proverbs, are strong walls, yet not always impregnable. Gainsborough, and a *few* others, have shown that they possessed the power to batter some of them down. He *could* “make a silken purse of a sow’s ear.”

After all—does not Sir Joshua, in the above passages, in some measure blink the real question? Does he penetrate fairly to the centre? or does he catch the essence of his subject? Or, does he not rather place the minor accessories on his fore-ground, and keep back the more important and sublime features?

Human passions called into action by supernatural, or divine circumstances, constitute the essence (as it appears to us) of "the restoration of the Ark," as a subject for a picture; just as it would for that of a poem. And wherever human passions are brought into action by supernatural means, the subject is *essentially* sublime. What else, in fact, is the amount of that lofty praise which Pindar so generously, so admirably, so justly, bestows on Homer—that of his possessing the power of connecting supernatural causes and agency, with the realities of nature and human passion? Sebastian Bourdon has felt this principle, but not felt it with quite sufficient force to catch the imagination, or reach the judgment of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Had his Israelites and Philistines been somewhat more conspicuous, the story had been more completely, and more sublimely told.

THE EMBARKATION OF THE ELEVEN THOUSAND
VIRGINS, WITH SAINT URSULA.

CLAUDE OF LORRAINE.

WHY are the figures of Claude of Lorraine, in some instances sustained by sentiment and simplicity, and pertinent to the occasion? And why are they in others, imbecile, and little better than dolls and dowdies? Why have some of his biographers reported that he modestly said to the patrons, who visited his studio, "If you purchase my landscapes, I present you with the figures that you find in them—I throw them into the bargain?" And why have others recorded that he was so vain of his figures, that he

said upon such occasions of chaffering, "It is the figures I sell, and present you with the landscape?" Could the same individual be thus diffident, and thus vain? Is one or other of these accounts, misrepresentation; and has the biography of artists been always as carelessly, or recklessly, written as at present? Has literature formerly, as inferior literature does at present, thought only, or chiefly, of its own sordid gains, and the gains of those who traffic in the mercantile article, and looked only to avail herself of the dazzling glitter that is reflected from spurious splendour, leaving the legitimate concerns of Art and Science to sink in oblivion, or *perchance* to swim, as if only of collateral, incidental, and very inferior, importance?

Let us examine these questions, as far as they concern this great artist; for though "inconsistencies cannot both be true:" seeming inconsistencies may be unreal.

When Claude arrived from Lorraine at "the eternal city," he was young, ignorant, *dull*, or as Mr. Cunningham, with more probability, has it, "*absent*;" as if his mental powers had been husbanded in reserve, till the advent of his initiation threw the arcanum of landscape-painting open before him, as the theory of gravitation revealed itself to Newton, when he saw the apple fall. His hand appears to have possessed no power but for the imitation of still life, or the slow life of landscape, and his mind no elective attraction for aught but its theory; and hence he is a remarkable example of the justness of that part of the reasoning of Helvetius, which led him to the inference that the Arts and Sciences are carried farthest by those men who know but few things, but know them profoundly.

Landscape, and landscape alone, seems to have absorbed his faculties. Even the indispensable accompaniment of figures, claimed not the same affinity with his mental character, but cost him effort, as we shall presently see, and they evidently have not the same *con amore* air with his landscape painting. It is very likely, that on his arrival at Rome, Claude *did* clean pencils, and grind colours for Agostino Tassi, as Sandrart, or somebody, has informed us; and that Tassi loved him, and taught him what he himself knew of the rudiments of the Art, at that juvenile period of his life, when they were both employed in painting signs for pastry-cooks, and other eating-houses; and that Nature was meanwhile engrafting on this rude stock, the elementary germs of all that was lovely in her inanimate productions—

All that the genial ray of morning gilds,
And all that echoes to the song of even.

But when he first began to paint landscapes, the cattle and figures which he introduced into them, were not good—they say. We may readily admit this, since it could scarcely have been otherwise.—They could not be good: because no man,—with whatever sensibility of perception he may be gifted, and even though accustomed to paint from still life, can delineate the human figure with any thing approaching to anatomical accuracy, without close and reiterated attention, and much practice; and the reader need not be told that cattle and figures do not stand still in the fields, or elsewhere, to be drawn or painted, like rocks and trees. Of the comparative imperfections of his human figures, Claude was so conscious (then) at this juvenile period of his life; or

beginning of his career as an artist, that he said to those who noticed his pictures favourably, "If you will purchase my landscapes, I will make no charge for my figures, but throw them into the bargain."

And this state of things must of course have continued for some years, during which we read that Courtois and Lauri, at least occasionally, peopled the landscapes of Claude with such scriptural, legendary, or classical, figures, as in the opinions of his friends and patrons, would suit the several scenes which he exhibited.

But what was proceeding meanwhile?—Why, the great landscape-painter was assiduously applying himself to the delineation of the human figure in the Roman Academy, both from the antique sculpture, and from the living model: and by the time he arrived at the prime of his life, he was so much improved, and could paint figures so well, or fancied he could paint them so well, as no longer to need, or desire, the extraneous assistance that had before been welcome.

He might now have become self-assured—perhaps in some degree vain and tenacious—upon this point; as men generally are of what they perform but second best: and during *this* period of his life some one may have heard him say, and afterward reported it, "If you will purchase my figures, I will present you with the landscape accompaniment:"—and this without any conscious, or unconscious, impeachment of his former sentiments.

In his youth he sought and wrought for landscape-fame, and for profit, and knowing his figures were of inferior pretensions, might well offer to throw them into the bargain to the purchasers of his landscapes.

In his mature age having attained this fame and profit, his anxiety reverted to his figures; and with the utmost sincerity he desired to see duly appreciated, what it had cost him much mental effort and manual practice, to produce. But there was something as deprecatory of the severities of criticism, as is the innocence of an infant, in his saying, "I throw the figures into the bargain;"—saying it as Claude did, in the pure integrity of simplicity, and not in the craft of trade: so that we may well stand excused, as we contemplate these figures, if we should

"Be to their faults a little blind;
And to his virtues very kind."

We think that the works of this artist afford convincing evidence of these facts and changes. His *Narcissus*, is no beauty, though his attitude is well conceived; and the *Liber Veritatis* contains the sketch of a picture which he painted of the Angel liberating St. Peter from Prison, where the figures are large and principal, and which was done about this middle period of his life. At this period too—that is when he was fifty-nine years of age, which is about the prime of the life of an artist who lived on to eighty-two—he painted his *Israelites* worshipping the Golden-calf, which actually contains no fewer than *forty* figures. And the *St. Ursula*, (the subject of our present article,) which contains still more! And under what circumstances was the former produced?

A gentleman, whom, from what is mentioned in the *Liber Veritatis*, we conceive to have been Mons. Golii (though it may have been Signor Carbo Cardello)—a gentleman who lived at some considerable distance from Rome,—perhaps in France, had been

shown a fine landscape by Claude, wherein the figures were, as he thought, of a very inferior description; and, wishing to possess a capital picture from the same pencil, he wrote to that effect, but delicately added to the commission, that he "was so charmed with the merits of Claude's *landscape*-painting, that he would not willingly have even a blade of his grass hidden" by the introduction of aught else.

Would Claude have felt this as an affront, or have accepted, or resented it, as a challenge, and have sent Golii an historical landscape, containing forty figures, if such a change as we have inferred, had not taken place in his self-esteem?

But he lived to the age of eighty-two; and in the decline of life he was afflicted with gout, and his mind as well as fingers, became enfeebled: he might then again receive assistance with regard to his figure-painting, or he might execute his figures with decaying powers. We believe there are extant, manifestations of both. But up to the age of sixty-five, we have proof in the National Gallery—not only that he continued to paint figures with unflinching vigour, but that he was at that age, so zealous and tenacious upon this point, and had so much courage withal, as to attack Saint Ursula with her Eleven Thousand Virgins!

As this picture of Saint Ursula and her Virgin followers, was painted for a churchman (Cardinal Pauli) there is no reason to suspect that Claude fixed upon the subject in pique, as he did on that of the Host of Israel and Golden Calf. And his prudence here, with regard to the number of figures really introduced into the picture, is worthy of some notice. If he had not heard how very difficult ancient Rome found it, to

keep up her establishment of *six* vestals, he had obviously heard of the custom of England, where, upon populous and state occasions, people appear by their representatives,—and has accordingly introduced one representative for every two hundred and seventy-five virgins, or about three and a half for every thousand, which, as the legend is an *English legend*, leaves *us* nothing to object to on the score of the number of figures introduced, or omitted; and the less as the composition is so contrived as to leave the spectator at full liberty to suppose (if he should so please) that the remainder of the pure and precious cargo, are advancing from behind the portico of the church—the church?—Yes, the church.

It must nevertheless be allowed that Claude has here drawn largely and *at sight* upon our credulity, or our indulgence, if he expects us to fancy with him that the noble Palladian palaces, towers, and temples, and the Christian church, which adorn this beautiful seaport, were erected here in England, prior to the year of our Lord, 238. But fine painting, like his, calls forth charity with our admiration; “Charity covereth a multitude of sins;” and candour obliges us to confess that, of sins against chronology, costume, and common sense, here are a multitude to cover. As the subject of this fine picture cannot be understood without some knowledge of the antique legend whence it is taken (and hardly with this knowledge), we shall here submit a sketch of it. People talk of the romantic absurdities of Arabian tales! but what are they to the English and Italian tale of St. Ursula, and her startling procession of Eleven Thousand Virgins!—As we do not print in the old black letter types of thrice worthy and renowned master Caxton, the majo-

rity of our readers (whom, for obvious reasons, we hope will not prove members of the Roxburgh Club) will probably be pleased to dispense also with the ancient orthography, where it is too obsolete to be intelligible to the less learned.

The story begins with the ignorant assumption that in A. D. 238, there was in Britain a king, who was styled King of England; this however is not out of harmony with the rest.—

“Y^e passyon of y^e xi. m. virgyns was hallowedde in this manere.” One of the kings of Britain, whose name was Notus, had been converted to Christianity, his daughter Ursula shone full of marvellous honesty, wisdom, and beauty, so that the King of England desired her in marriage for his son, and sent a solemn embassy to Notus upon the occasion; on the reception of which, his majesty began to be “moche anguysshous* because his daughter was ennoblysshed in the fayth of Jesu Chryst, whylst the prince adored ydolles, and bycause that he wyst well she wolde not consent, and also bycause he doubted moche y^e crueltie of y^e Kynge.” But Ursula, divinely inspired, unexpectedly consented to the marriage, upon the following conditions:—1st. That the suitor should send to her father ten virgins, and one to herself, [these we must suppose to be of noble birth,] and that to each of these virgins, he should send a train of a thousand. 2d. That the young prince should be baptized; and, 3d. That he should allow her three years “for to dedycate her vergynite,” during which her betrothed should be informed in the Christian faith. To the surprise of all parties, “the

* Here is the probable etymon of the modern English word *anxious*. It comes from anguish.

yonglynge receyved this condycion gladly and hasted his fader and was baptysed." Then came virgins from all quarters, and many bishops came also to attend them on their pilgrimage; among whom was Pantulus, bishop of Basyl, who went with them to Rome, returned with them to Cologne, and there received the honours of martyrdom. St. Gerasyne, queen of Sicily, who had converted her husband from a cruel tyrant to a meek lamb, and was the sister of Bishop Morice, and of Darye (mother of St. Ursula,) informed by letter of what was proceeding, came also and embarked with the princess and her train. The embarkation from the shores of England, is the probable subject of Claude's picture; but we write here not without some uncertainty. We shall add the sequel, however, not only as it may assist us in clearing up this uncertainty, but because few picture-gazers will not entertain a reasonable anxiety to know what became of this numerous host of virgins.

The pious princess and her train had a prosperous wind, and fine weather, such as the painter here seems to promise them, and passed over to the port of Tyelle [of which I can make nothing better than Scheldt] in a single day. Without debarking there, they proceeded to Cologne, where an angel of the Lord appeared to St. Ursula, and promised her that, after performing their pilgrimage to Rome, the virgins should return to that place. The legend proceeds to imply that they voyaged onward to Basle [up the Rhine] and "lefte there theyr shyppes and went to Rome a fote." The pope, having also been born in England, was right glad at heart: he received the princess and her virgins with all honour, and that same night it was revealed to him that he should receive *with*

them the crown of martyrdom ; which revelation he kept to himself : and after baptizing such of the virgins as had not previously been initiated, Cyriac would have resigned his holy office and dignity, but was opposed in this intention by the cardinals, who were adverse to his going after “ those folysshe virgyns, but he wolded not agree to abyde.”

The legend does not treat of any re-embarkation at Civita Vecchia, Basle, or elsewhere, or say how the multitude returned to Cologne ; but it was most likely a pedestrian journey : in which event we cannot indulge Claude, or ourselves, by fancying that any *Italian* embarkation is the proper subject of his picture, difficult as we find it to suppose this *Italian-looking* landscape to have been intended to represent an English sea-port. In short, we are here at a dilemma of absurdities ; not at all dissonant however with the absurdly tragical catastrophe of the legend. The saint (Ursula) with her virgin followers, the pope, and a large company of bishops and other ecclesiastical personages, who had been warned, or invited, by visions, to accompany them, returned to Cologne, and were all cut to pieces or beheaded by the host of Huns, which were at that time beleaguering the city—the prince of the Huns himself despatching St. Ursula with an arrow, because she refused him for a husband. So that at last the pope’s angel was mistaken, the princess being—not martyred according to promise, but murdered, by a rascally Hunnish lover.

This picture, numbered 54 in the *Liber Veritatis*, was originally painted for Cardinal Pauli ; it afterward belonged to Cardinal Barberini ; then to John Lock, Esq. celebrated for his fine taste in the Arts,

who transferred it to Noel Desenfans (in 1787 ;) of whom it was purchased by Mr. Angerstein ; so that its *pedigree* is clear and unimpeachable : and being dated in the year 1665, it was painted when Claude was sixty-five years of age, after he had acquired the power and the confidence of which we have traced the history, and here behold the manifestations, with regard to the painting of figures.

Reckoning the great and small, near and distant, figures, here are about sixty in the present picture, sufficiently near to demand care and knowledge in their execution ; and in the whole, reckoning the distant assemblages of spectators, and the virgins who have embarked, not fewer than a hundred ; and they fully justify the professor Phillips's remark as to the propriety of Claude's conceptions, or the intention which governs the introduction of his figures ; beside being in more perfect unison with his landscape in regard to light, shade, and colour, than they would probably have been had they proceeded from any other pencil and palette than his own ; for, though so numerous, they are ably distributed into groups that are not ill assimilated, and are all engaged with much local and various propriety, in the business of embarkation, or in some concomitant and appropriate actions. Some of the mariners are busied with their cordage in unmooring the vessels, or in handing bales, portmanteaus, and other packages, toward the boats that are to convey them on board the transport ships : others again, of the islanders—among them, some well-dressed persons, evidently of superior rank—are witnessing, with becoming interest, the embarkation of the maidens.

There is, however, one exception to this local propriety of employment: Claude has armed all his devoted virgins with *bows and arrows*—either from some misinformation; or, it is possible, there may exist some other version of this ancient legend than has fallen in the way of our research, which other version has governed the present composition. For the introduction of such artillery, which gives to the virgin pilgrims the character of Amazons, we are unable to trace the smallest reason or pretence that is at all satisfactory, or to offer more than a mere conjecture that the painter (or those whom he consulted) mistakenly fancied his army of martyrs were going on a *crusade* under the red-cross banner, and had therefore thought it a duty thus to prepare themselves to shoot at unbelieving Saracens; which does but involve a fresh anachronism.

So it is, however: and while some of these war-accountred damsels are descending a noble flight of steps toward the sea, the main body appear issuing from the portal of a circular temple, the upper part of the portico of which is a little out of perspective. We must suppose this edifice to have been intended for a Christian church, where, doubtless, the devoted virgins have been congregated to pay their orisons on the morning of their departure: and before this church, near the rectangular flight of steps which descend to the sea-beach, on a well-constructed stone quay or platform, either the princess Ursula, or her queen mother; or it may be St. Gerasyne, the queen of Sicily—a crowned figure, with a held-up train to her dress, bearing a red-cross banner, and attended by about half a dozen damsels—stands forth in the

act of finally addressing the virgins ere they embark ; or we may suppose her to be invoking a blessing on their voyage,—or both.

The fleet destined for the transporting of these devoted victims, gaily dressed with ensigns and pennants, is getting under weigh. Of three ships,—forming, with the lofty trees from which they relieve, the right hand side-screen of the landscape,—the mariners are busy in loosing them from their moorings ; a fourth, whose cool, blue flags, are in excellent juxtaposition to the mild sunshiny sky beyond them,—has moved toward the mouth of the harbour, and a boat-cargo of the maidens are ascending it by side ladders : but the three ships on the right hand, some of which are but partially seen, lead the spectator's imagination beyond the boundary of the picture-frame, and teach him not to doubt that others must be waiting there, because he finds himself unable to suppose that the maidens of old England, departing on a divine errand, will be more closely packed than those of Africa, when carried into slavery.

All of these transport ships are very properly of ancient construction—older than, we think, Claude could have seen in the port of Civita Vecchia ; at Venice *, or elsewhere—they having loftier stern galleries and forecastles, and more projecting prows, than were in use during the middle of the seventeenth century ; and it required consummate powers both of hand and eye, on the part of the painter, to manage this fleet, with its numerous long and slender

* Upon further reflection—Claude may perhaps have seen such in the port of Genoa, or at Venice, among the old laid up argosies and galleons.

lines of masts, spars, cables, shrouds, and other rigging; some relieving by light, and others coming off dark from the trees and water beyond, without destroying the breadth necessary to an efficient chiar-oscuro; and this, Claude has managed with great address, by introducing on a cape, which, jutting out into the sea, affords foundation for the fortress (machicolated, and having oilet holes,) by which the mouth of the harbour is protected,—the extremity of a grove of lofty trees within the fortress, which are gently swayed by the sea-breeze.—But we are getting among the poetry of Claude's morning landscape features, and, as the seamen say, are "taken aback," by old and serious recollections appertaining to the *Morning of Life*:—Surely, with an *English* sea-port immediately before our eyes, we may be allowed to use a nautical term or two.

Many years ago—half a century it must be, at the least—I well remember the lively pleasure I enjoyed in seeing this delightful picture at Mr. Locke's, in Portman-square. I have never passed the door since without thinking of it. It was the first Claude I had ever seen; and perhaps it may still be the best: and it opened my eyes so widely as to the powers and possibilities of landscape-painting, that I cannot repress here a very natural wish—nor easily refrain from expressing it—that, placed as the picture now is, within an infinitely wider range of influence and sphere of attraction, it may have a similar effect upon the youthful visitors of the National Picture Gallery. But I now behold it again with all the deeply recollected charms of "a first love," (as Hazlitt writes of the *Susanna* of Lodovico Caracci;) and although to

me it is, in one sense, an affair of "John Anderson my Jo," yet is there *something* of cheering reciprocity. The Claude "flourishes in its immortal bloom, unhurt,"—and I—am still able to luxuriate, as the reader may perceive, among its beauties—if not with the same delirium or intensity as formerly—with more (as I am willing to think) of the sober certainty of waking bliss.

But after all, the chaste maidens and their maritime companions, are here but like bell, book, pope, and candle, in Raphael's *Incendio del Borgo*: The landscape is the crown, and sceptre, and glory, of Claude's performance. There is a pervading tone, in which the elements of air, earth, and water, participate, of *cheerful* (not mirthful) *enjoyment*. There is a general rejoicing of the morning, as if "the day-spring from on high had visited us." The whole scene from the distant horizon to the fore-ground, is serenely joyful; full of mild emotion, and fresh

"As when fair morning *first smiled* on the world."

The music of the hymn* that Milton's Adam sung in Paradise, when his Eve awakened, and the newly risen sun beamed over its beauties, is resounding here on the supposed shores of England. To this music of happiness the waves are dancing with elegant delight, as if anticipating with congenial pleasure the piety and purity they are destined to upbear; while the sea-breeze is singing freshly among the shrouds

* Of course this hymn is not re-quoted here. Some portion of it we have already cited in discoursing of the Italian morning scene from the pencil of Jan Both.

and rigging of the transport-ships, as in token of the mild joy of wafting the holy virgins on their pilgrimage. All is serenely pure and exhilarating, as if Nature herself, or Providence,

— “whisper'd promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance, hail !”

Of course we are writing here under the poetic, or the profound and mysterious, supposition, that martyrdom was to be hailed by St. Ursula and her devoted followers, as the *birth*—temporal existence being regarded but as the gestation—*of the soul* to heavenly *life* and immortality. If any do not now entertain this faith, they are to remember—(and their repugnance and misgivings are to be hushed by the remembrance)—the prevailing religious opinions in the age and country where Claude painted ; and that he painted this picture of the devotion of St. Ursula for a Cardinal, who might not fix upon the present subject out of any disinterested love of the painter's transcendental excellence in his art. If this system of belief seem folly to some of us, we are not to forget here, that it was celestial truth and wisdom to the contemporaries of Cardinal Pauli and Claude.

Such is the serenely exhilarating and poetic *senti-ment* of the picture. The hour represented is early : a few tender exhalations are just faintly forming into thin clouds, which are scarcely discernible. The sun's orb is hidden behind one of the transport ships ; but, from the length of those cast shadows which stream sublimely across the bay from the shipping and from a castle of some magnificence which guards its entrance, he cannot be many degrees above the

horizon. The sun-light in the sky is of a mild *yellow* lustre, well suited to the climate of England, whether we test it by nature, in our own summer season, or compare it with the *Italian* mornings of Jan Both.

The brighter hue of the newly risen sun, catches here and there with acute splendour on the edges of the loftier billows, and is thus conducted toward the fore-ground objects, consisting,—beside the numerous figures and superb edifices,—of clamped stone pavements, marine shells, and weeds, fragments of columns serving as mooring-posts, and gondola-boats richly carpeted for the reception of the devoted damsels. The warm tints of the stone-colours, and those still warmer of the carpets and other draperies, come up with an effect of great richness, from the cool grey-green of the sea. The artist's positive colours being chiefly reserved for these Turkey-toned carpets, and the dresses of his figures; all conduce to the air of temperate splendour which distinguishes his fore-ground.

The distant objects on the right hand, consisting chiefly of a lofty beacon, and a spacious and turreted palace of Palladian* architecture, adorned with terraced gardens, latticed vineries, and exotic shrubs, are extremely tender and true to the tones of nature in their aerial morning haze. A more distant lofty Pharos stands forth on a rock in the sea beyond, under the same exquisite air tint. The sea, as we have intimated above, is of emerald green suffused

* We have not been unwilling to allow Claude some credit for the antique air of his shipping, but are able to say nothing in favour of his having anticipated Palladio by more than a thousand years.

with grey, just as it appears under the colour reflected downward from a cool azure-tinted zenith, except where the slant sunbeams gild it with his early radiance : and this greyish green of the marine shadows, brings forward the richer tints of the near objects with the most grateful brilliancy, without garishness, while it impresses on the tasteful observer the difference between the serenity of morning sun-light, and its noon-day glare. Every thing, in short, is wrought up to that true pitch of temperate brightness, in which Claude was so supremely excellent, and which is most exceedingly gratifying to the eye of the connoisseur.

END OF VOL. I.

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